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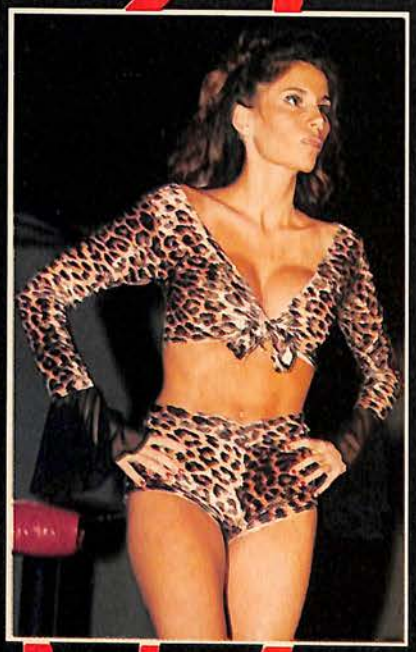

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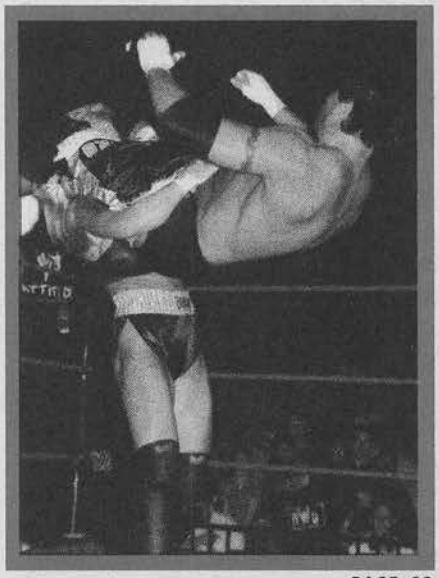

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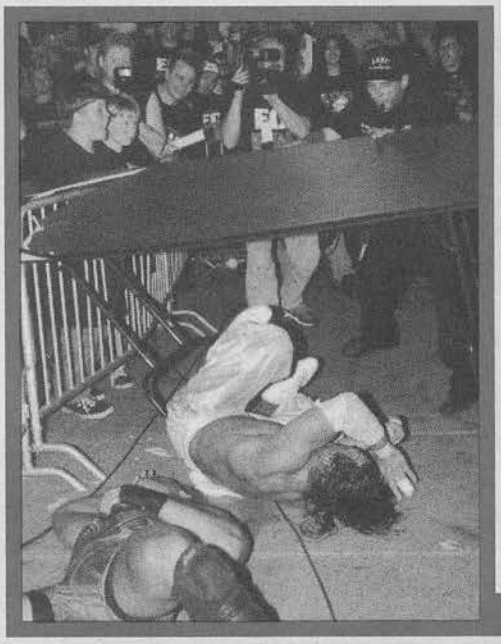

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YOUR Letters

NO FAIR

I used to believe that all title shots in this sport were determined by the competitors' ratings and win-loss records, but that doesn't seem to be the case anymore. Nowadays, all you have to do is win a battle royal to get your shot.

Just last year, veteran journeyman Steve Lombardi came within a split second of living the *Rocky* dream when he won a battle royal and then, given his title shot, came extremely close to defeating then-WWF World champion Shawn Michaels.

If average wrestlers know they can get a world title shot by finding ways to survive battle royals, then what motivation will this give them to work hard in preliminary matches like the superstars of the sport do when they pay their dues?

It's scary to think that someone like Bull Pain or Chainz could stumble into a title bout and could actually score an upset if the champ overlooked an opponent who shouldn't even be in the ring with him in the first place.

STEVE NARDI
West Berlin, NJ

TALKING HEADS

I am writing to complain about the bias that certain television announcers show toward certain wrestlers of their own federation.

First is Tony Schiavone, who frequently claims that the upcoming pay-per-view is going to be "the biggest night in the history of wrestling."

Then there's Jim Ross, who insists on reminding us every five minutes that The Undertaker is a "phenom," Steve Austin is "the toughest S.O.B. in wrestling," and Shawn Michaels is "the greatest pure wrestler in the history of wrestling." Let's not forget Ross' *Raw Is War* colleagues, the dreadfully boring combination of Kevin Kelly and Michael Cole.

Then there's ECW's Joey Styles. Styles is entertaining to listen to at first, but his endless screeching and chants of "Oh my God!" send me reaching for the mute button rather quickly. The only announcers I find acceptable are WCW's Mike Tenay and Larry Zbyszko. Tenay is probably the best play-by-play man in the business, and Zbyszko manages to liven up WCW programming without being too biased (except when talking about Scott Hall). Tenay and Zbyszko are the exception to a painful rule. To paraphrase Simon and Garfunkel, "Where have you gone, Gordon Solie?"

DAVID HOPKINS
Fort Worth, TX

"Brooklyn Brawler" Steve Lombardi scored a near fall on then-WWF World champ Shawn Michaels last year. Reader Steve Nardi doesn't like the fact that preliminary wrestlers can earn title shots by winning battle royals.

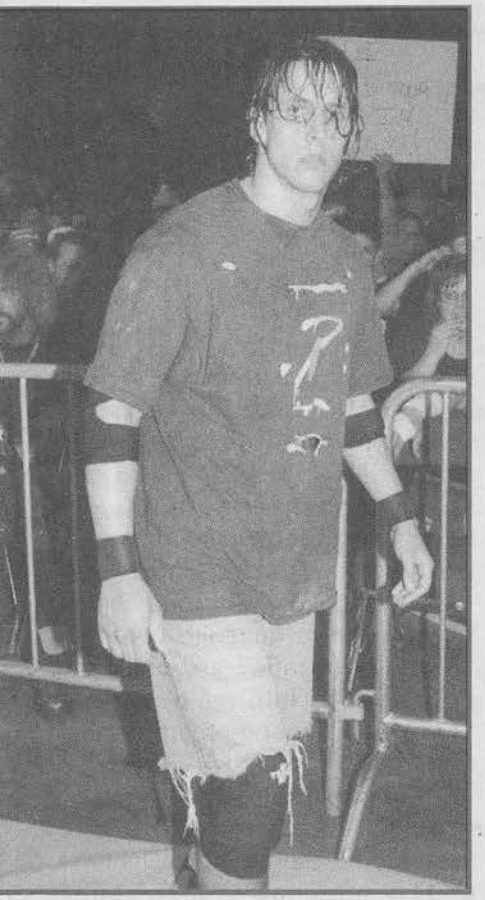
CARRIED AWAY

This letter is in regard to Carrie Gillespie's letter ("J.J. Misguided") in the July 1998 issue.

You do not have the right to judge Raven and his Flock, especially Billy Kidman and Lodi, two of the best wrestlers in WCW. Keep your comments to yourself. Long live Raven and The Flock. They rule 4 Life.

HANNAH FREDERICK
Mount Olive, KY

I am writing in response to Carrie Gillespie's letter in your July



While many WCW fans despise The Flock, the talents of Billy Kidman cannot be denied. Hannah Frederick says that Kidman and his sidekick Lodi are two of the best wrestlers in the federation.

1998 issue. She wrote that Raven and his Flock were more of a threat to WCW than the NWO.

Well, Carrie, to begin with, at least Raven doesn't align himself with the NWO. The NWO wrote the book on ring interference and prove it every time someone they hate wrestles. They even have a high-ranking executive on their side in Eric Bischoff. How dangerous is that? Letting them do what they want and not doing anything about it is not the answer.

If J.J. Dillon is going to lay down the rules to Raven, then he should do the same for the NWO as well. At least Raven, being in WCW, has the option to fight the NWO the way Sting and "Diamond" Dallas Page do.

Who knows? Maybe The Flock will get tired of the NWO as well and do something about it. More power to The Flock.

CHRISTINA HANSEN
Pine Knot, KY

"HITMAN" HATER

I hope all the Bret Hart fans out there finally see what a creep this Canadian loser really is. All we've heard about since last November is how Vince McMahon "screwed" the poor "Hitman." While all his fans cried foul (the same idiot American fans who remained loyal to him after he insulted them and

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Sometimes even Mike Tenay has trouble figuring Bret Hart out, but Mark Ertel says he has had the "Hitman" pegged all along. He thinks the fans shouldn't be surprised by Hart's entrance into NWO Hollywood.

The Wrestler

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WHAT'S Happening

By Bill Apter

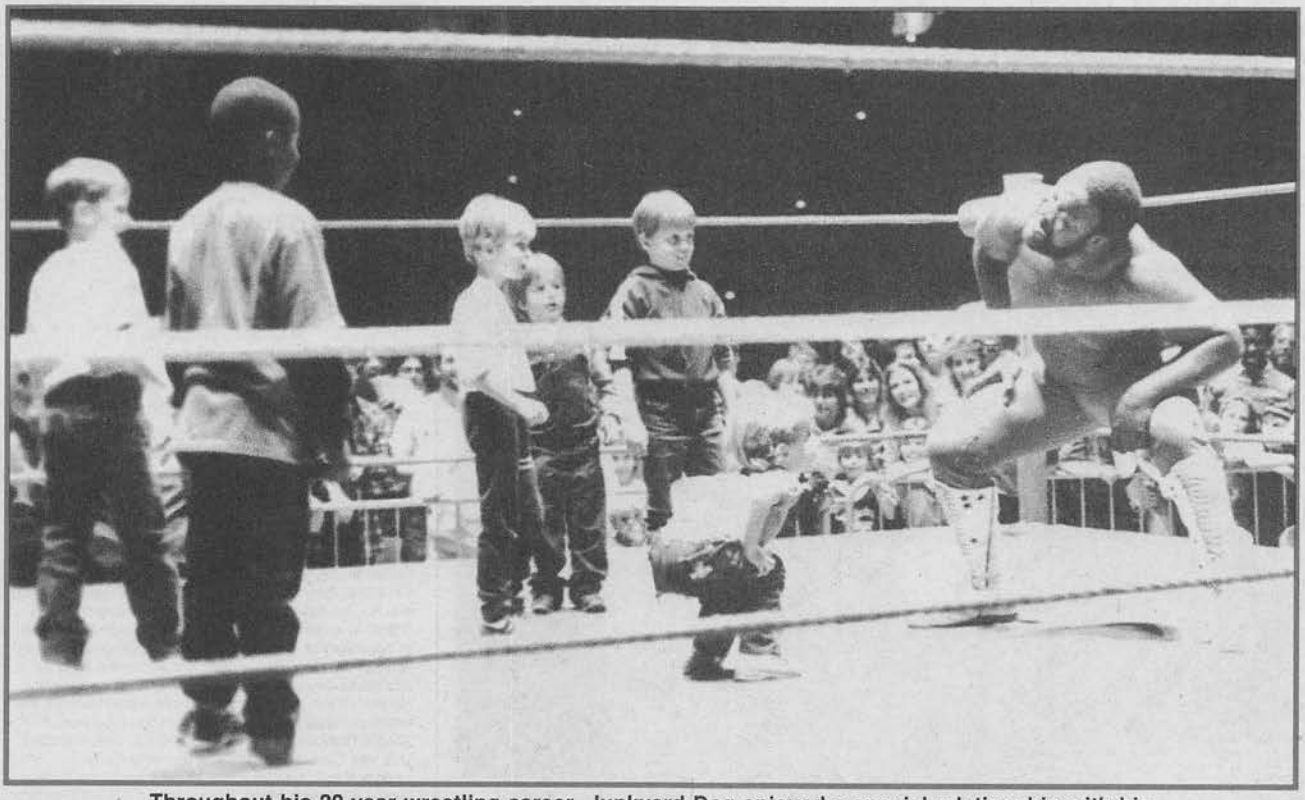
JUNKYARD DOG, ONE of the most popular wrestlers in the WWF during the rock 'n' wrestling era of the mid-'80s, was killed in a single-car accident on Interstate 20 in Mississippi on June 2. Details of the accident were sketchy at press time. JYD, whose real name was **Sylvester Ritter**, was 45.

Ritter turned pro in 1978 as a protege of wrestler **Sonny King**. He first began wearing a dog collar and carrying a chain to the ring with him after he was temporarily blinded by medicated powder during a match against **The Freebirds**. Not wanting to cancel future bouts, he actually chained himself to his opponents so he could wrestle them. Ritter was still an active wrestler at the time of his death. Less than a month before the accident, ECW honored him as a hardcore legend at its Wrestlepalooza pay-per-view in Marietta, Georgia.

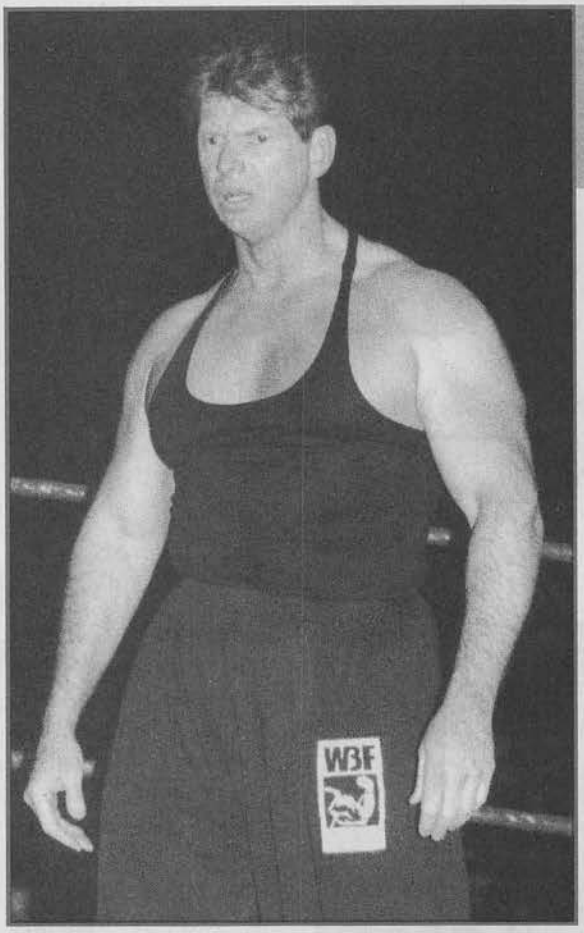
When I heard about what happened to him, I went back and reviewed an interview I did with him a few years ago. Just about all he wanted to talk about was how great the fans had been to him over the years. "I remember in Houston one night," he told me, "the fans got some money together and bought me a crown to tell me I was their king of wrestling."

He was also very proud of the work he did at juvenile centers. "The kids of today are our only hope for the future," he'd say, "and we got to send them on the right road."

"Junkyard Dog was a phenomenal attraction," noted **Bill Watts**, who promoted JYD's legendary matches in Mid-South



Throughout his 20-year wrestling career, Junkyard Dog enjoyed a special relationship with his fans, especially the young ones. JYD—whose real name was Sylvester Ritter—died in a car accident on June 2.



Vince McMahon seems to be coming to the realization that to get the WWF World belt off the waist of Steve Austin, he'll have to defeat "Stone-Cold" himself.

Wrestling. "He had that natural charisma that separated him from the rest of the pack. Man, did he ever love the kids. He'd dance with them and stand for hours on end signing autographs, and you should have seen them smile. What happened was such a shame."

There'll never be another like him.

In other news, well, how many times have you heard the expression, "If you want the job done right, do it yourself!" You hear it a lot from executives who aren't happy with the job being done by their underlings. **Vince McMahon** must be using that line a lot. **Dude Love**, who had become one of McMahon's corporate puppets in his quest to end the reign of WWF World champion **"Stone-Cold" Steve Austin**, failed to beat Austin at Over the Edge and was fired. **Kane** was the next hired hand on McMahon's list, but the chances of him completing the task were not very good, as **The Undertaker** vowed to stop him from doing so at all costs.

So it looks like McMahon will have to try to get the job done himself ... in the ring.

"Hell, I'm waitin' for him to cut the crap and get in there with me man-to-man already!" Austin told me. "If he wants to take this belt away from me so damn bad, let him get his [butt] in the ring and try to do it. Don't send no more of your flunkies, Vince. Get the damn job done yourself!"

Although McMahon declined comment, several high-ranking executives have confirmed that there was some consideration given to an Austin-McMahon match for SummerSlam on August 30.

How tough was it for **Sting** to decide between WCW, **NWO Wolfpac**, and **NWO Hollywood**? **Hollywood Hogan** called to tell me that he met with Sting face to face just a few days before Sting went over to NWO Wolfpac and offered to get him walk-on roles in his next three movies if he'd join NWO Hollywood.

"The guy didn't even blink an eye before he said yes," Hogan said. "We shook hands on it. He told me it was signed, sealed, and delivered, brother. He even goes on TV wearing the black and white and hugs me in front of the world to show the deal was complete. Then he goes and rips off the shirt to show the black and red Wolfpac logo underneath. I couldn't believe it. This man is the guy so many

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Steve Anderson's View

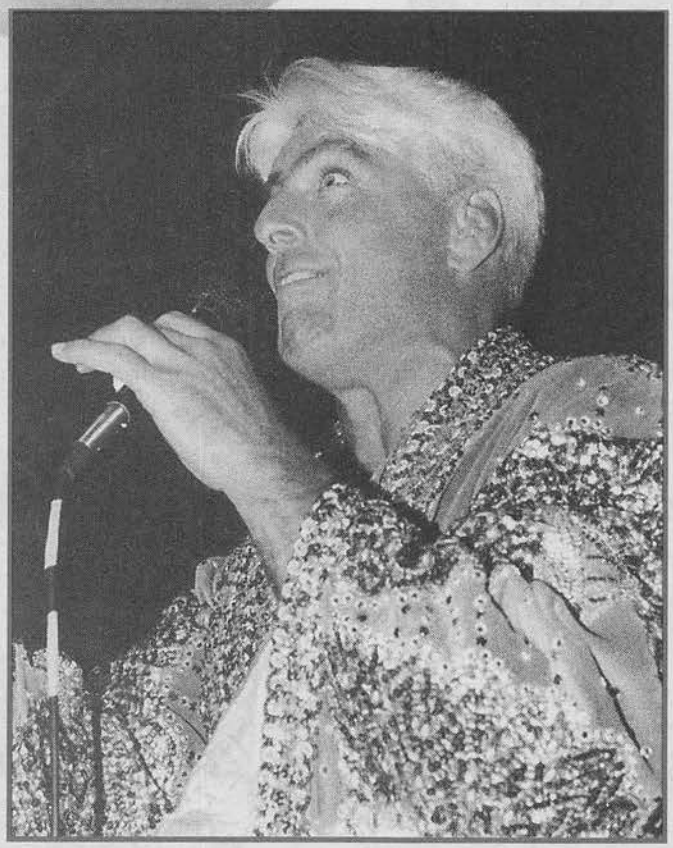
No Holds Barred

with Steve Anderson

WRESTLING SURE has changed. The product you see on television today does not come close to resembling the product of even three years ago, let alone *20* years ago. As wrestling has gone from family entertainment to extreme sport, and as superstars have come, gone, and taken sabbaticals, there has always been one constant: Ric Flair.

Well, until now.

Legal complications have done what no other opponent could do to the "Nature Boy." They've knocked him out of the game. Right now, Flair and WCW are tussling over a "he said, they said" battle that has spilled into the courtroom. WCW is suing Flair for breach of contract—specifically for not appearing at a certain *Thunder* broadcast. Flair claims that he told WCW executives well in advance that he would be attending a wrestling tournament that his son was involved in on the night in question.



The beautiful face of Ric Flair has been missed by millions of wrestling fans during the last few months. Because of his legal problems with WCW, he hasn't appeared on TV. Fans, however, have clearly not forgotten about him.

So while the briefs are flying back and forth and while lawyers continue to debate and try to resolve this mess, a void has been left in wrestling. For the first time, Ric Flair is invisible and silent; he can't appear on WCW TV and isn't able to comment publicly on what is going on.

That does not mean that Ric Flair is no longer an impact player. Quite the opposite is true. The longer he is off WCW broadcasts, the more his legend grows. Internet fans have shown their frustration by flooding WCW with e-mail and other correspondence demanding a quick resolution to this matter. Either bring the "Nature Boy" back or "free Ric Flair." Those three words have become a clarion call heard from millions of computers around the world and from fans in the arenas.

Out of this chaos, certain "wrinkles" have developed. *People* recently conducted an online survey to determine the 50 most beautiful people in the world. It promised that the top 10 would be featured prominently on their website and on the pages of the magazine.

Radio superstar Howard Stern campaigned for an oddity known as Hank the Angry, Drunken Dwarf (who appeared alongside Jackyl and a few other unusual characters on a *Raw Is War* broadcast in May). Stern's cam-

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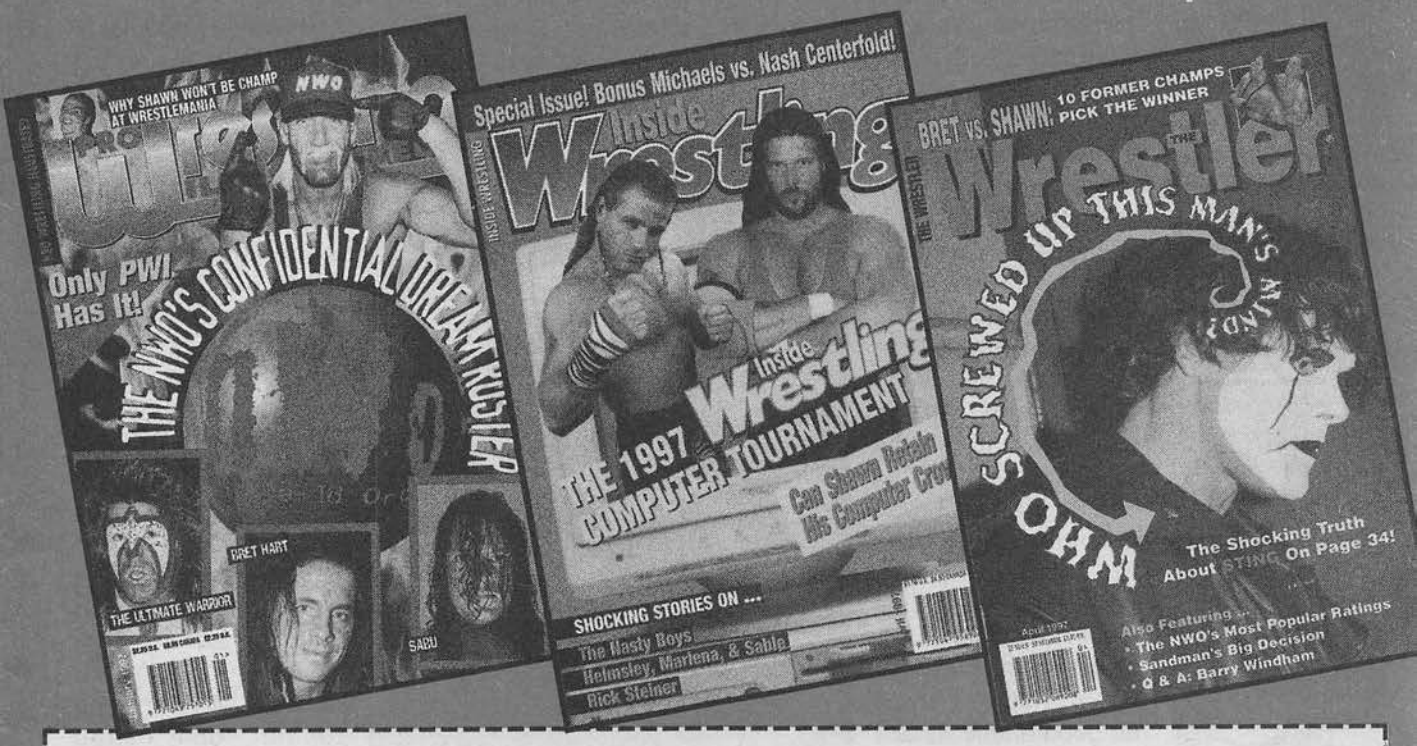

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Inside...

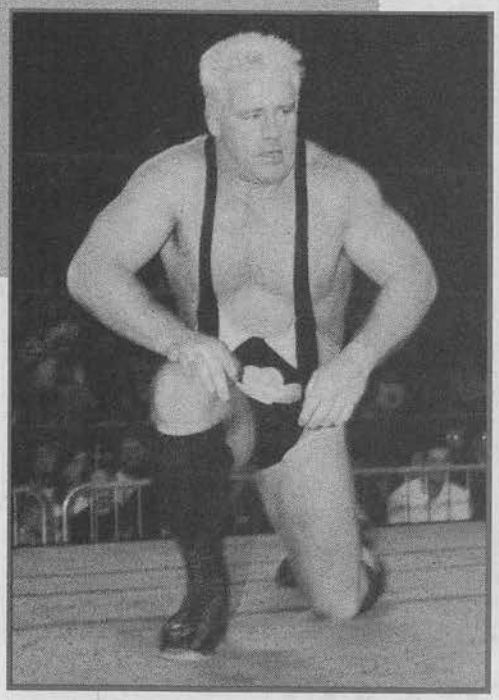
By Liz Hunter

HAVING LOGGED UMPTEEN years in the wrestling business, I've come to learn that I get some of my most interesting interviews when I'm not prepared to do them.

When I heard Dennis Rodman was planning to make an appearance at the June 8 *Nitro* in Auburn Hills, Michigan, I was determined to get an in-depth interview with him and Hollywood Hogan together. I tried to get into their dressing room before the show. No luck. Tried to corner them during the show. Sorry, otherwise occupied. After the show, security wasn't letting anyone near them. All totaled, it was a little over five hours of my time wasted.

Finally, an hour after the show ended, I returned to the backstage area to collect some of my stuff. Almost all the wrestlers had left the building.

But just as I was getting ready to head for the exit, I saw Dave "Fit" Finlay loading his gear into a bag. I had never met Finlay, so I figured it was as good a time as any for introductions. I wasn't expecting him to be too friendly, but I should have known better. The man you see in the ring is rarely the same man you see away from the ring.



Finlay: fitting champion?

Finlay said he was surprised that I even wanted to talk to him. "Aren't you one of those people who think I'm lucky just to have won this TV belt in the first place?" he asked. There was no bitterness in his voice. In fact, he even smiled after he said it. He had obviously learned to live with the snide comments.

"Actually, I know a lot of wrestlers who were happy to see you win that TV belt," I said. "Quite a few have told me they consider you one of the most underrated wrestlers in the world."

He just shrugged.

"But it must get you upset when people say you were lucky to beat Booker T for the belt and lucky to beat Chris Benoit in your first title defense. In both matches, your opponents were distracted. And now you're defending the belt against guys like Brad Armstrong and Norman Smiley while Benoit and Booker T are in the midst of their best-of-seven series."

"Just look at this thing," he said as he fished the TV belt out of his bag. "This is all that matters. I'm the champion. It's part of history, and I'm going to enjoy this to the fullest for as long as it lasts.

"I've been in a lot of matches and a lot of fights in my life, and sometimes you do get a bit lucky and win one. But I've defended my belt on practically every WCW show since I won it, and I keep winning. If people call that luck, then to hell with 'em. But I'm telling you, little lady, you won't find one wrestler who's had it out with me who'll say I wasn't one of the toughest guys they ever faced."

Something about the way he said it made me believe him.

"But why haven't you put your belt on the line against some of the bigger stars in WCW?"

He dug into his bag a second time. This time, he pulled out a sheet of paper. It was a contract. Not just any contract, but an *open* contract. He told me he had signed one just like it before every WCW show since he won the belt and always told J.J. Dillon to find him any suitable opponent.

"Not every champion does this, you know," Finlay said. "If they can beat me, fine, but don't ever accuse me of handpicking my challengers."

A shot at Goldberg, perhaps? Sensing Finlay was anxious to get going and probably catch a plane to the next town, I thanked him for his time.

"Good luck against Booker T or Benoit at The Great American Bash," I added.

He stopped briefly as he headed down a long hallway and stared at the belt for a few more seconds. I let him enjoy the moment. □

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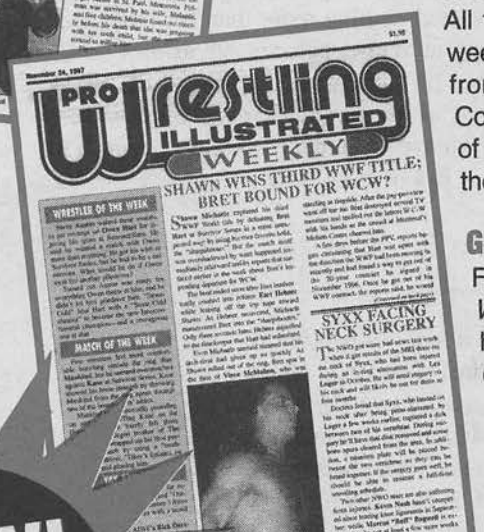

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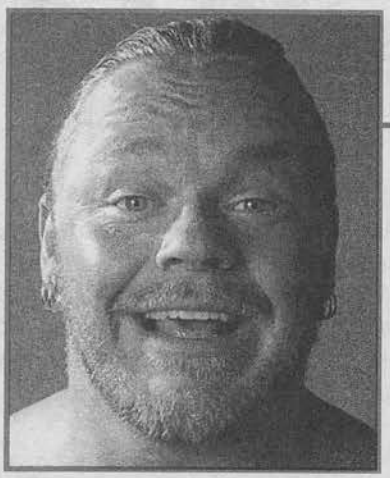
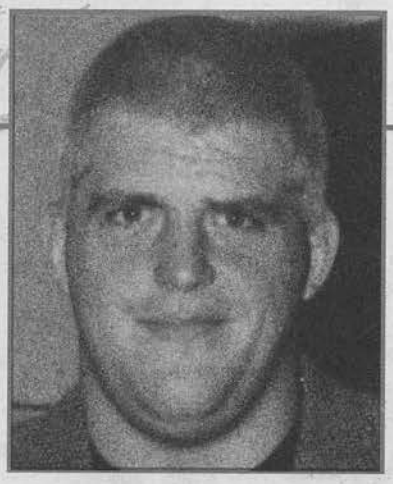
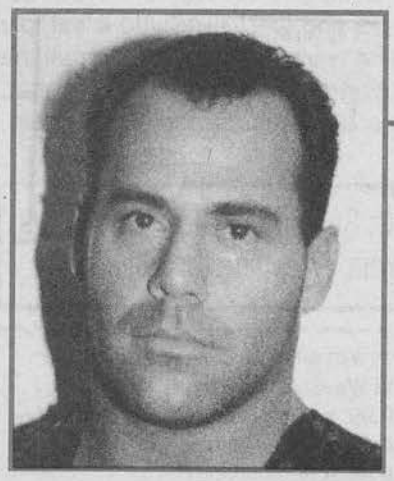


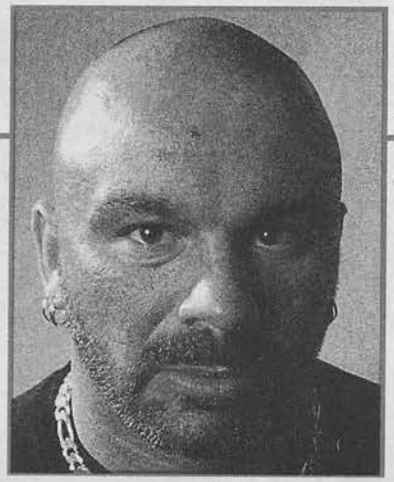
Thumbs Up to Shane Douglas. He shouldn't have been in the ring, but there wasn't a doctor who could stop him. Certainly, ECW promoters weren't going to get in his way. They wanted nothing more than for Douglas to risk life and limb by climbing into the ring at Wrestlepalooza '98 against Al Snow. Well, not only did Douglas wrestle, but he successfully defended the ECW heavyweight title. Now the bad news: Douglas has finally been sidelined and figures to be out until at least next fall. He'll have to undergo elbow surgery. But what we saw at Wrestlepalooza was a brave man doing courageous things.



Thumbs Up to Dustin Rhodes. It's over. It's done. Let's hope it's now a part of his history. When Dustin Rhodes, a.k.a. Goldust, burned his Goldust costume, a rather sordid chapter in his career ended, a chapter during which a talented wrestler separated himself from his father, Dusty, and his wife, Terri (Marlena). Goldust did everything within his means to shock and titillate. Now we're not sure whether it's a good thing that Dustin has sided with Steve Austin. It kind of cuts down on his World title opportunities, doesn't it? But Austin's a no-nonsense wrestler. That's the kind of wrestler Dustin needs to be.

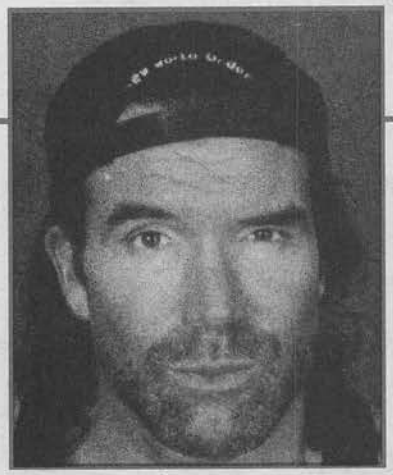


Thumbs Up to Dean Malenko. He waited. He listened. He seethed. And then he got revenge. Dean Malenko stood quietly on the sidelines for two months while Chris Jericho went out of his way to humiliate him and his family. Jericho insulted Boris Malenko, Dean's late father. He belittled Dean's accomplishments. He attacked Joe Malenko, Dean's brother. Revenge came at Slamboree '98, when Malenko won a cruiserweight battle royal under a mask, then removed his mask, shocked Jericho, pummeled him into submission, and took his WCW cruiserweight belt. We wish somebody had done that to Jericho a long time ago.



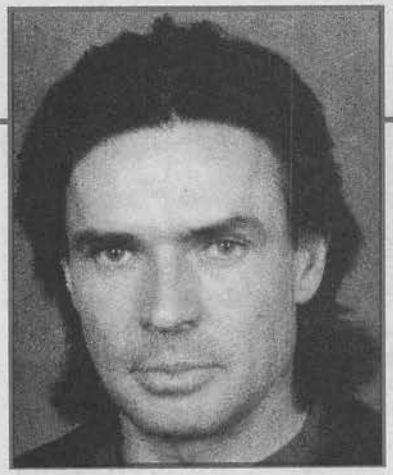
Thumbs Up to Perry Saturn. He's flown the coop ... although he says he never lived in the coop to begin with. Indeed, Perry Saturn was Raven's friend, but, according to Saturn, that doesn't mean he was a member of The Flock, and it certainly didn't mean he wanted Raven or any other Flock members interfering in his matches. Saturn's a proud man and he wants to win on his own ... without Raven's help. It took guts for him to stand up to Raven, though they still seem to be reluctant allies. We never could understand why a man with Saturn's skills was willing to play a subservient role to Raven for so long.

THUMBS Down



Thumbs Down to Scott Hall. There is no end to the surprises in the NWO and Scott Hall certainly pulled off a shocker when he attacked his long-time Wolfpac friend and tag team partner Kevin Nash during their tag team title defense at Slamboree. Sting and The Giant won the belts as a result of Hall's actions, and now The Outsiders are truly on the outs. What a mistake. In our opinion, Hall and Nash were the glue that held The Wolfpac together. They were the originals, the ones who started it all, the former WWF superstars who brought a new attitude to WCW. Now Hall has thrown that all away.

Thumbs Down to The Ultimate Warrior. As spring turned to summer, the hot rumor in wrestling had The Ultimate Warrior on the verge of a comeback, this time in WCW. Our advice to fans: Don't get too excited. Our advice to the former WWF World champion: Take a seat. Remain in retirement. The Warrior has retired and unretired so many times that we often lose track of when he's wrestling and when he's not. He's one guy who has never been able to keep his mind on business for a long period of time. Maybe reality is painful: The Warrior is not cut out for the rigors of wrestling.



Thumbs Down to Eric Bischoff. The WCW president was guilty of poor marketing when he challenged WWF chief Vince McMahon to a match at Slamboree '98. Although Bischoff warned viewers that they shouldn't buy the pay-per-view expecting to see McMahon, because he didn't expect him to show up, just the slight possibility of a McMahon vs. Bischoff *tete a tete* had to be enough to lure some viewers. Of course, McMahon didn't show up—he never said that he would—and Bischoff had the nerve to call him a coward. Not quite, Bischoff. He just wasn't willing to play into your hands.

Thumbs Down to Vince McMahon. And while we're on the subject of federation executives ... a big thumb of the nose to Vinnie Mac for his callous disregard for the WWF World heavyweight title. Vince, wrestling fans don't care what you think the ideal WWF champion should be like. All they care about is that a champion is worthy of the title, and Steve Austin definitely fits that description. McMahon's bias against Austin is dangerous, and somebody should keep him out of the ring.

CORRESPONDENTS Reports

Steelton, PA *(Correspondent—Timothy A. Walker):* "Wiseguy" Jimmy Cicero knew he was in for a tough match with "Dangerous" Devon Storm on this Int'l Pro Wrestling card at the I.W. Abel Hall, but he never imagined that the quick thinking and athleticism of Storm's manager, the beautiful Dawn Marie, would ultimately do him in.

The fans were clearly behind Storm and Dawn Marie throughout this exciting match. Storm grabbed an early advantage by using his speed and agility to outmaneuver Cicero. He took Cicero to the mat with a series of armdrags and hip-tosses, then sent Cicero crashing hard to the canvas after nailing him with a dropkick.

Later, Cicero used his strength advantage and a series of closed fists, which he concealed from the referee, to pound on Storm while Dawn Marie protested to the official. Every time Storm tried to make a comeback, Cicero grabbed Storm's hair, pulled him to the mat, and applied another tight chinlock. Storm finally worked his way out of Cicero's grip, but Jimmy nailed him with several hard clotheslines and elbows-mashes that looked like they would put a dent in Devon's chest.

Finally, Devon managed to connect with several hard savate kicks to Cicero's head and chest. Storm then carried Cicero across the ring and deposited him on the top turnbuckle, where he hit him with three more hard savate kicks to the chest. Storm followed that up with a top-rope "Frankensteiner," and Cicero narrowly avoided being pinned.

After surprising Storm by throwing him out of the ring, Cicero made the mistake of taunting Dawn Marie. She eventually got so mad that she climbed into the ring to confront him. When Cicero grabbed her by the hair, she quickly turned it into a "Stone-Cold stunner." When Storm re-entered the ring, he got an easy pinfall victory over the groggy Cicero.

In other bouts: Christian York pinned Mark Shrader ... Paul Mitchell pinned Larry Brown ... Dana Hinkle beat Tommy Idol ... Don Rock beat "Big" Stu Braxton ... Asian Empress Sky Shadow (managed by Harvey Wippleman) pinned Sweet Destiny ... 911 & Corporal Punishment II defeated Cueball Carmichael & The Original Corporal Punishment when 911 pinned Carmichael and The Original Corporal Punishment simultaneously ... Johnny Graham pinned Rob Noxious (managed by Harvey Wippleman) ... Tom Brandi beat Rocco Rock in a no-disqualification table match.

All Dawn Marie needs to do is stand quietly at ringside and she can be an asset to the men she manages. But she did more than distract Jimmy Cicero on behalf of Devon Storm at a recent IPW card. She "stunned" him.

St. Louis, MO *(Correspondent—Angel Bradley):* Faarooq and Steve Blackman have been gelling quite well as a team lately, but Blackman's lack of experience cost them a chance at victory against two of their arch-rivals, Rocky Maivia and Owen Hart.

Rocky first incited the fans by getting on the microphone and insulting them. By the time the

(Continued on page 56)

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YOU Asked Us

Q: "This question is for WWF World champion 'Stone-Cold' Steve Austin: Steve, what do you think is the real motivation behind your situation with WWF owner Vince McMahon? Do you think he is trying to screw you out of the WWF title because of your attitude, or is his problem with you personally?"—Kevin Stewart, Beamsville, Ontario

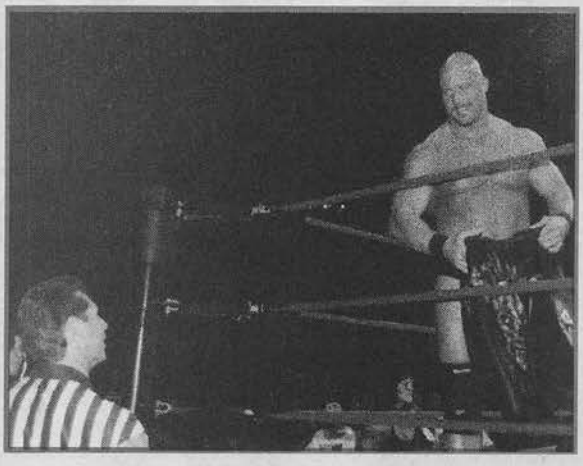
A: **"Well, Kevin I wish I had an answer for ya, son," Austin said. "But the truth is that nobody—not Gerald Brisco, not Pat Patterson, not Vince McMahon—is gonna screw Steve Austin out of anything. And I don't care if Vince has a personal problem with me or not. It don't matter, anyway, because Vince won't face me like a man. Everybody knows he's yellow. I've faced men a lot tougher than Vince McMahon in my eight years as a professional wrestler, and I'll be dammed if I let some stuffed shirt steal the damn belt from me. I earned it, and it's gonna take a lot more than three damn stooges stacking the deck to get it from me."**

• • •

Q: "I have a question for Dawn Marie: I was wondering if you were thinking about coming to the WWF and wrestling Luna Vachon? If you did, who would be *your* manager?"—Steve Venetz, Lansdale, PA

A: **"Sorry to break your heart, Steve, but I do not have any immediate plans to come to the WWF," the sultry manager replied. "Right now, I'm too busy with my growing stable of wrestlers in Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling to concern myself with very much of anything else. Of course, my star protege, Lance Diamond, just won the PCW Americas title, but that's not good enough. I want the heavyweight belt. And in case you didn't know, I *always* get what I want. So I have plenty of business here in PCW before I even think about moving on. Of course, many wrestlers and managers dream of making it to the WWF or WCW, but as far as wrestling Luna Vachon is concerned, I'm not sure I'll ever want to face that beast. However, if and when I decide to, you can bet that Lance Diamond will be my manager. Why should I seek advice from anyone else?"**

The sensuous Dawn Marie says she has too much unfinished business in Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling to leave the promotion now. But she would like to test the WWF waters one day.



Steve Austin and Vince McMahon may have been all smiles when this picture was taken, but their disdain for each other runs deep. Austin vows never to bow to the WWF brain trust.

• • •

Q: "This question is for Owen Hart: Owen, what led you to turn

(Continued on page 57)

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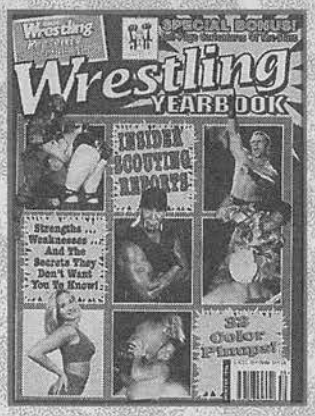

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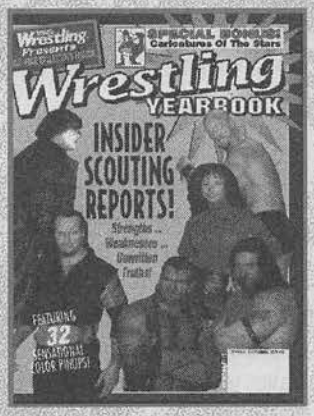

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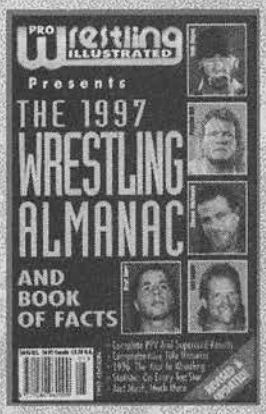

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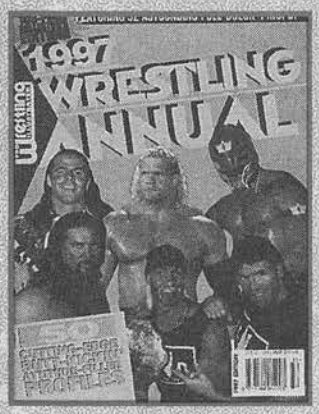

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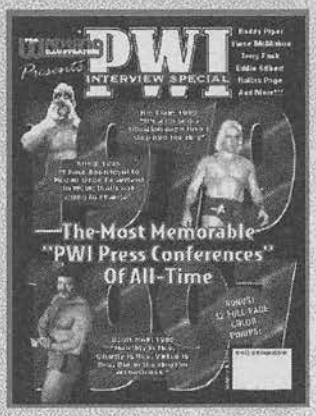

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Introducing

KEVIN NORTHCUTT

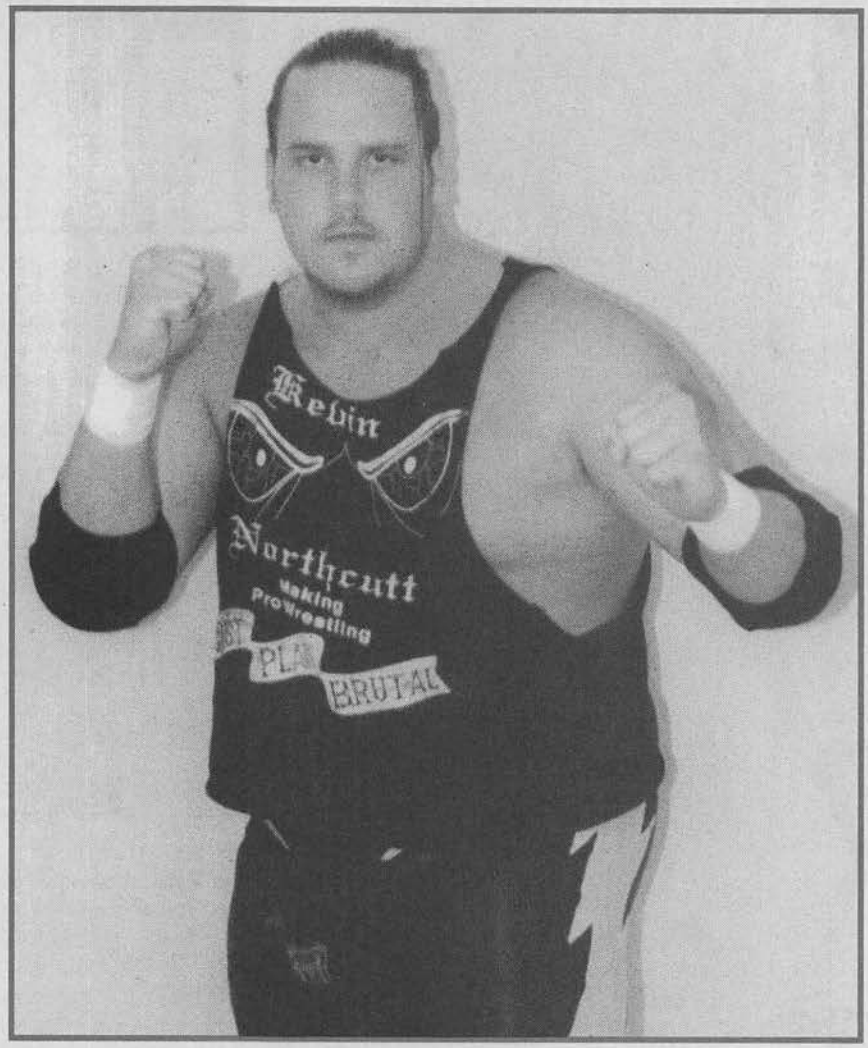
By Frank Krewda

JUST IMAGINE A 6'8", 325-pound man descending on you from 15 feet above. Sounds scary, huh? Well, that's what wrestlers on the Tex-Mex/Louisiana independent scene often have to look forward to when they climb into the ring to face 25-year-old Kevin Northcutt.

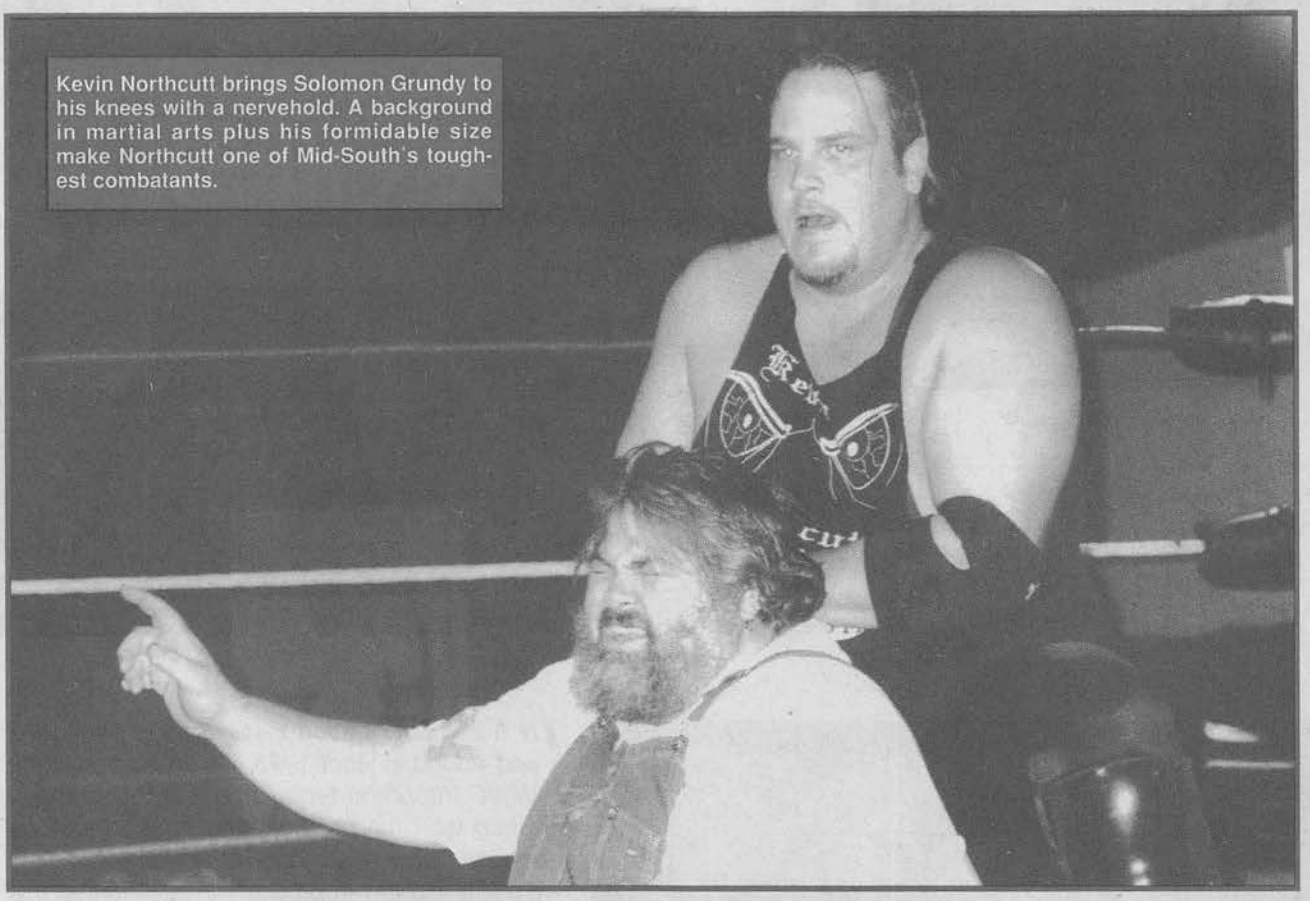
Mind you, Northcutt doesn't spend all his time jumping around like a Luchadore. Sometimes he'll use his amateur wrestling skills (all-district honors at Holy Cross High School). Other times he'll use his vast knowledge of the martial arts (he has a black belt in tae-kwan-do). Or what he learned while serving as a sparring partner for former Ultimate Fighting Champion Kevin Rossier, not to mention his own background in shootfighting (Northcutt is 2-0 in the International Warrior Federation bareknuckles competition).

With a resume like that, Northcutt never doubted he could one day make a living as a professional wrestler. Neither, apparently, did Sika the Wild Samoan, who agreed to train Northcutt after his son, Big Matty Smalls, introduced Kevin to him in 1992.

For the next year, Northcutt bounced bars on the bayou, threw himself into kickboxing, and worked toward the day he could call himself a professional wrestler. That day finally came in February 1993, when he defeated Viper on a Mid-South Wrestling card. Since that day, Northcutt has remained a fan favorite, at least in Mid-South. When he drifts south of the border to wrestle on International Champ-



Planchas. Topes. Superkicks. Anklelocks. These are just some of the ways Mid-South heavyweight champ Kevin Northcutt can beat you. Athleticism and adaptability have this New Orleans native tearing up the Southern independent circuit



Kevin Northcutt brings Solomon Grundy to his knees with a nervehold. A background in martial arts plus his formidable size make Northcutt one of Mid-South's toughest combatants.

ionship Wrestling cards, he has found that fans do not exactly embrace his anti-Mexican alter ego, The Natural Born Killer.

But controversy is something that Northcutt has already grown accustomed to dealing with—especially in his two reigns as Mid-South heavyweight champ. His first reign was marred by treachery as former WWF and WCW superstar One Man Gang attacked him after he beat Elijah Levay for the belt in April of this year. It was a turn that left Northcutt bitter. "I brought Gang in here to watch my back, only to have him steal the belt from me. He says he wants to put tradition back in the belt, but the only tradition he's going to see is me whoopin' his old [butt]."

Northcutt eventually won the belt back from One Man Gang, but at press time, the two were still engaged in what has been the hottest feud of Northcutt's career. "What I hate about veterans like Gang is that they fear change," he said. "I represent a new breed of wrestler. We're the Mid-South now, and we ain't going nowhere. It's time for the old guard to get out of the road!"

Comments like these suggest that Northcutt has little regard for tradition, but the lifelong wrestling fan quickly points out that many of the stars of yesteryear actually inspire him, especially Terry "Bamm Bamm" Gordy.

"Terry is unbelievable," he said. "Just the fact that he's competed successfully all around the world, plus his straight-forward attack in the ring. He's like me out there. He doesn't go for that comedy crap."

Indeed, there is nothing funny about Northcutt when he steps into the ring, but there is plenty to be impressed by. Northcutt is lithe enough to sustain an aerial attack, although he prefers to use submission holds such as the anklelock. His superkick has proven to be a very effective finisher as well. And given his size, he has found that very few opponents are willing to trade punches with him.

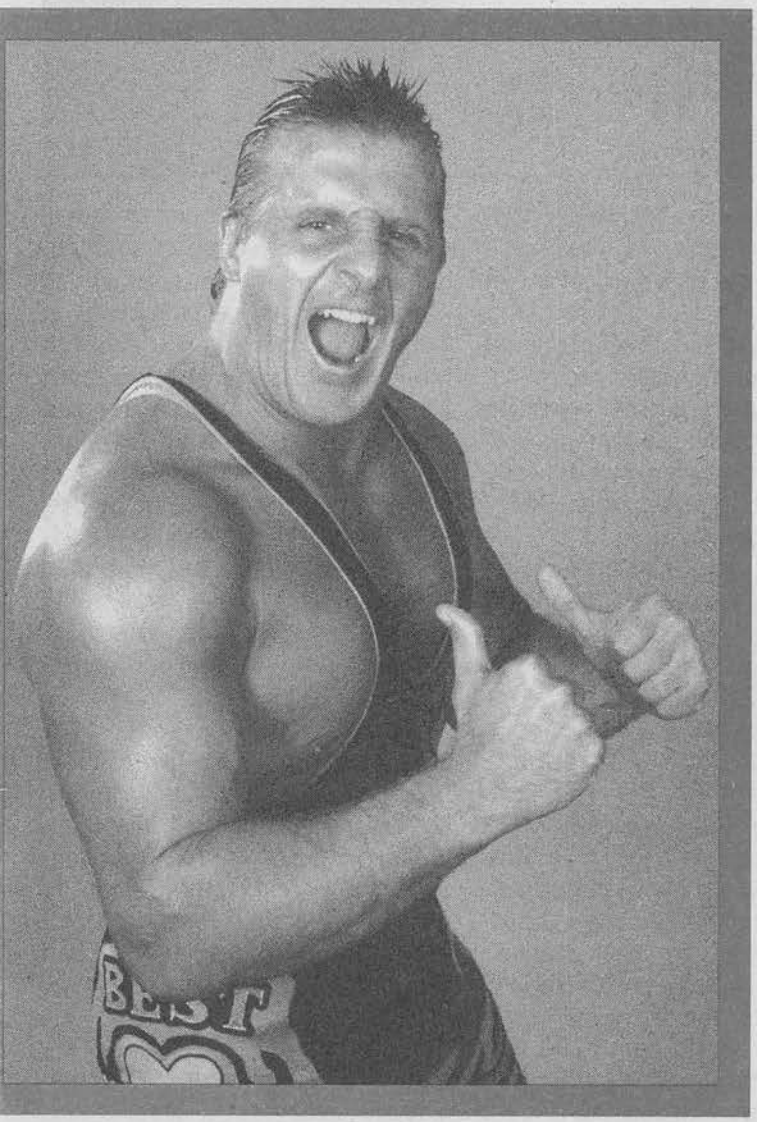
Northcutt's well-rounded repertoire and fierce sense of competition have caught the attention of several independent promotions in Texas and Louisiana. He and The Maniac held the Texas tag team title for Lone Star Wrestling for nine months in 1995 and were the reigning champions when the promotion closed. Northcutt has also competed in the Unified Wrestling Federation and Ultimate Championship Wrestling. He has even wrestled in WCW, though he dropped his first match to Bobby Eaton in October 1997.

Despite his successes in Mid-South, Northcutt says he won't feel he's accomplished much until he carves his niche in some foreign territories. "First, I want to win consistently in Mexico, then I want to go over to Japan," he said. "Japan is sort of a testing ground. If I can prove myself over there, I'll know I've arrived."

Somewhere on the bayou, One Man Gang is wondering if that trip is really necessary. □

Q & A

OWEN HART



IN A 365-DAY period that began in April 1997 and ended in April 1998, Owen Hart won the WWF Intercontinental and European titles, reunited with his brother, and caused serious injuries to Steve Austin and Ken Shamrock.

So why did Owen proclaim in late-April of this year, "Enough is enough! This [stuff] has to stop! Things are going to have to change around here!"

It's simple: When you're a wrestling Hart, losing to a wrestler you view as inferior, such as Hunter Hearst Helmsley, is unacceptable. And losing time and again to Helmsley is enough to make a Hart change his ways.

Perhaps Owen realized that being a lone wolf in today's WWF is not a safe proposition. His reunion with Bret was short-lived because Bret jumped ship to WCW last fall. His partnership with the unstable Ken Shamrock was getting him nowhere. A loss to Helmsley at WrestleMania XIV was embarrassing. Another loss to Helmsley at Unforgiven—capped off by an ambush by DeGeneration X—put Owen over the top.

The next night, Owen immediately put his plan into action. Early in a match pitting him and Shamrock against The Nation of Domination's Rocky Maivia and Mark Henry, Owen jumped Shamrock from behind. The attack was brutal: Owen wrapped a chair around Shamrock's ankle and jumped on it repeatedly, cracking a bone. He refused to release a "sharpshooter." Then he bit Shamrock's ear. When Owen left the ring, the NOD followed close behind.

"Owen's latest group might be short-lived, too," said Senior Editor Bill Apter, who spoke with Hart. "They usually are. I think he's a loner at heart."

Q: People say ...

A: Who cares what people say, Bill? When have I ever cared about what people say? I can't go around worrying about what people say. Otherwise I'd never get anything accomplished. Now go ahead. Finish your question. What do people say, Bill? I can't wait to hear this.

Q: Well ...

A: C'mon, spit it out already! I know what people are saying about me. I hear what's going on. They're saying I'm unstable. They want to know why I'm with the Nation. Well, I'll tell you why: I'm with the Nation because I didn't like the way things were going. Because I like the idea of somebody watching my back. Shamrock sure as hell wasn't.

Q: Was he supposed to?

A: No.

Q: So?

A: I'm not saying he was supposed to. Did you hear me say he was supposed to watch my back?

Q: No, but you made a point of saying that he wasn't watching your back. Look here. *(Apter shows Hart his notes.)* "I like the idea of somebody watching my back. Shamrock sure as hell wasn't."

A: Well, he wasn't.

Q: And you weren't watching his, either.

A: I wasn't supposed to.

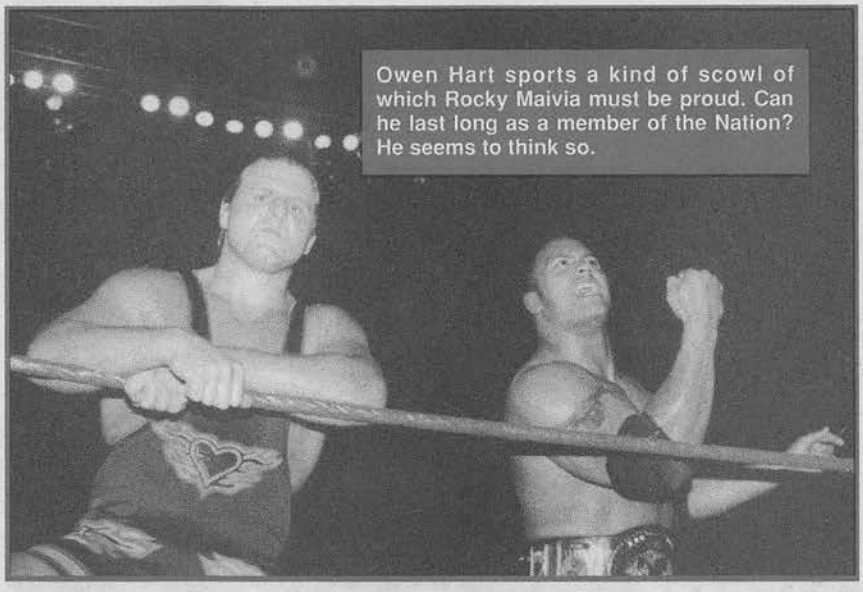
Q: Exactly. But can you trust the Nation? Nobody else has been able to trust them.

A: Like who?

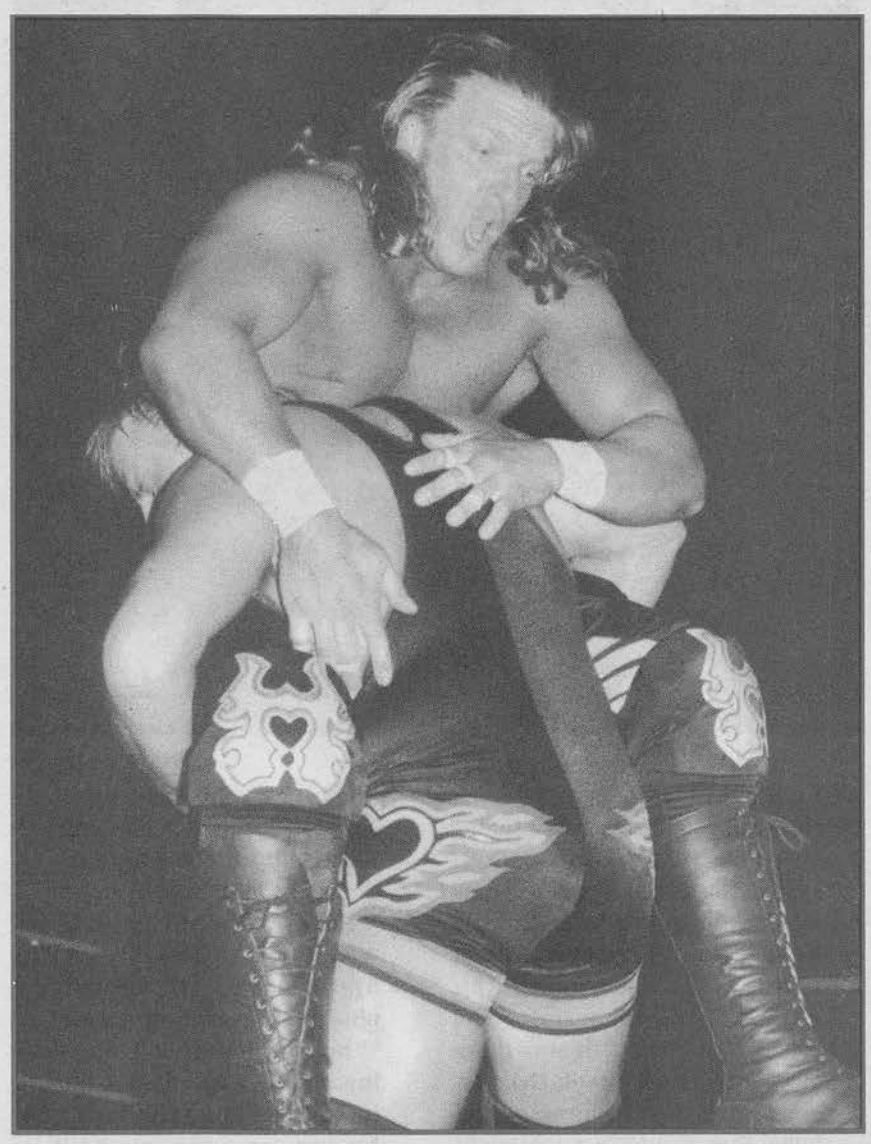
Q: Like Faarooq?

A: Faarooq is yesterday's news. "The Rock" brought the Nation into a new era. A much better era.

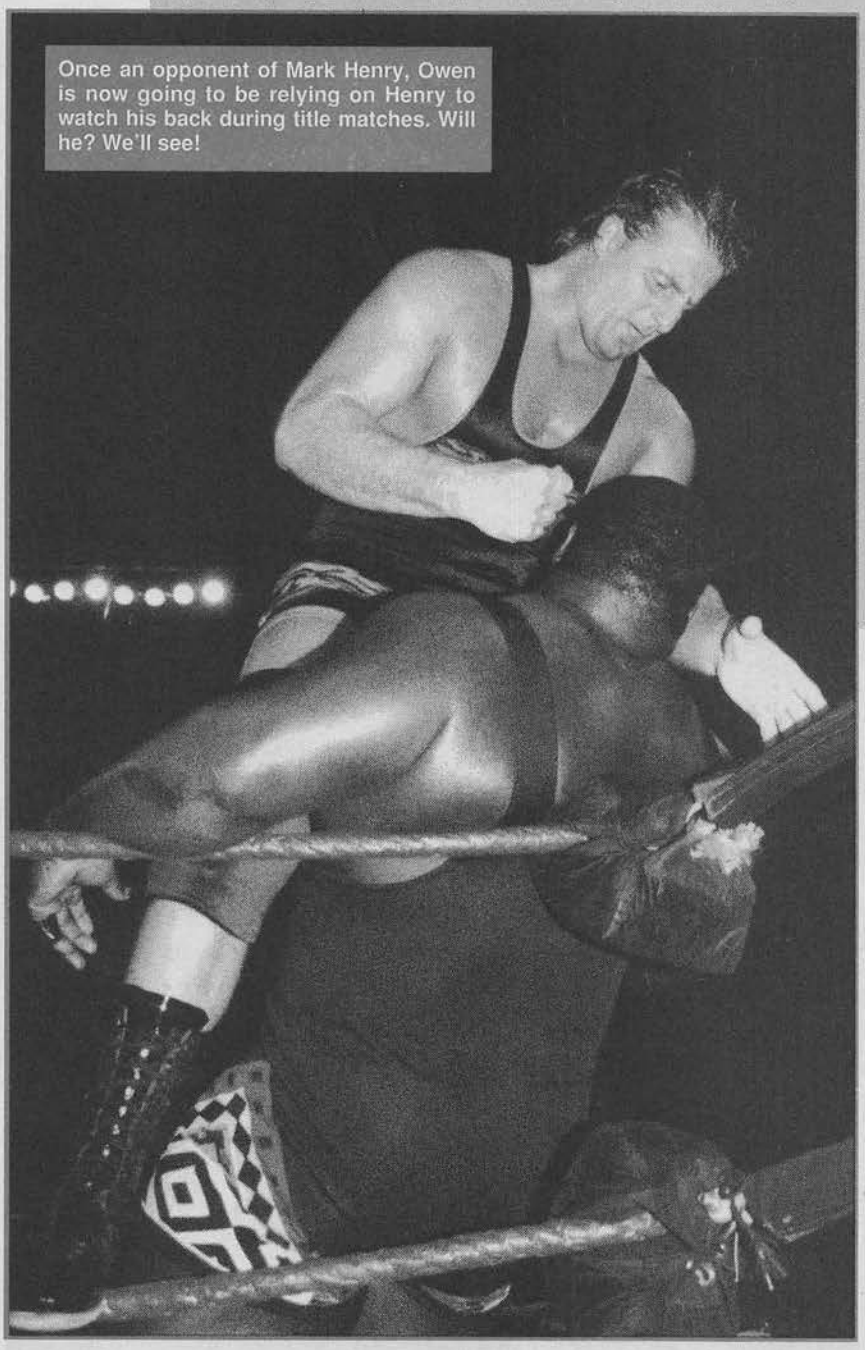
Q: But how can you trust Rocky Maivia? After all, you feuded with him less than a year ago. You beat him for the I-C title. The man is an egomaniac. You're both strong-willed people. I can't see the two of you peacefully coexisting for more than a few months.



Owen Hart sports a kind of scowl of which Rocky Maivia must be proud. Can he last long as a member of the Nation? He seems to think so.



Hart's primary target these days has been Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Don't expect the feud between the two to end anytime soon. It has expanded to include all of the Nation and all of DeGeneration X.



Once an opponent of Mark Henry, Owen is now going to be relying on Henry to watch his back during title matches. Will he? We'll see!

A: I can trust him.

Q: How can you know that for sure?

A: Instinct. Just call it instinct. Listen, this is the way it is: I was looking for a little help—a little backup—and they were willing to help. That whole match with me and Shamrock against "The Rock" and Henry? It was thing of beauty. Once I took the first couple shots at Shamrock, I knew they would just join right in. We all knew what we were doing, every one of us except Shamrock, who walked into an ambush. Stupid. He's an idiot. He wasn't watching his back.

Q: Should he have been?

A: Yeah, he should have been. After the things I said the night before at Unforgiven, about things having to change? What did he think I was talking about, a facelift? A change in my workout regimen? Me buying some new clothes? He had to figure something was going to change, and change radically, and if I wasn't about to make some new friends, what did he think I was talking about?

Q: I don't think anybody knew.

A: And that's what made it such an ingenious plan. Nobody knew.

Q: Including Shamrock, who turned out to be an innocent bystander.

A: Innocent bystander? I don't know about that. Somebody had to be the victim, so it was him. You know, in this sport, you have symbols. To me, Shamrock's broken ankle is a symbol of the new Owen Hart. The new and improved Owen Hart.

Q: But why new? You were having a great year. You were Intercontinental champion, European champion, even World tag team champion not too long ago. The next step had to be ...

A: What am I today?

Q: Nothing.

A: Exactly. I don't have a title. And that has to change.

Q: Can we talk about Bret for a minute?

A: No.

Q: Why not?

A: Because I don't want to talk about Bret. If you want to talk about Bret, talk to Bret. He'll answer all your questions. Bret doesn't talk about me, so why should I talk about him?

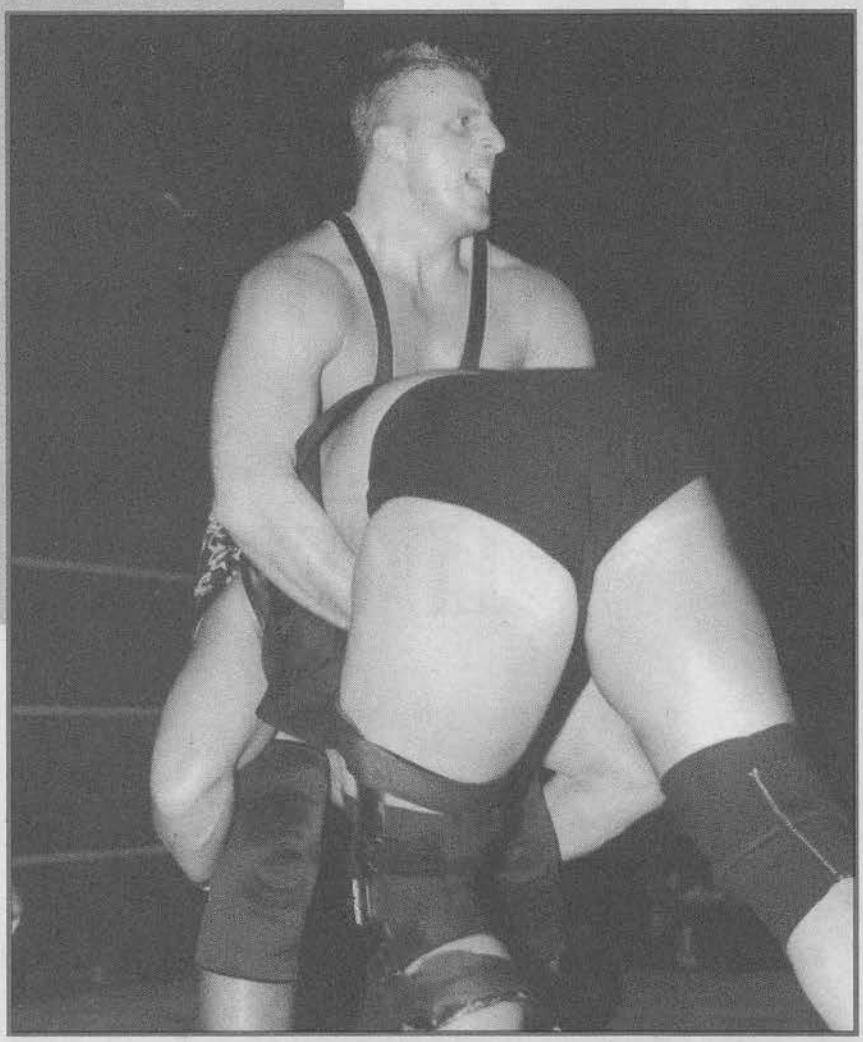
Q: He's your brother, and he jumped to WCW.

A: That's right, he's my brother, and I love him. I'm glad we reconciled before he left. I talk to him whenever I feel like talking to him. So let's just leave it at that.

Q: And he's on Hulk Hogan's side. How do you deal with that?

A: Listen, I told you I didn't want to talk about Bret, and I'm not going to talk about Bret. We're here to talk about me, and I'll only answer questions about me. What Bret does is his business. He's happy. What else matters?

Q: Okay, on to another subject.



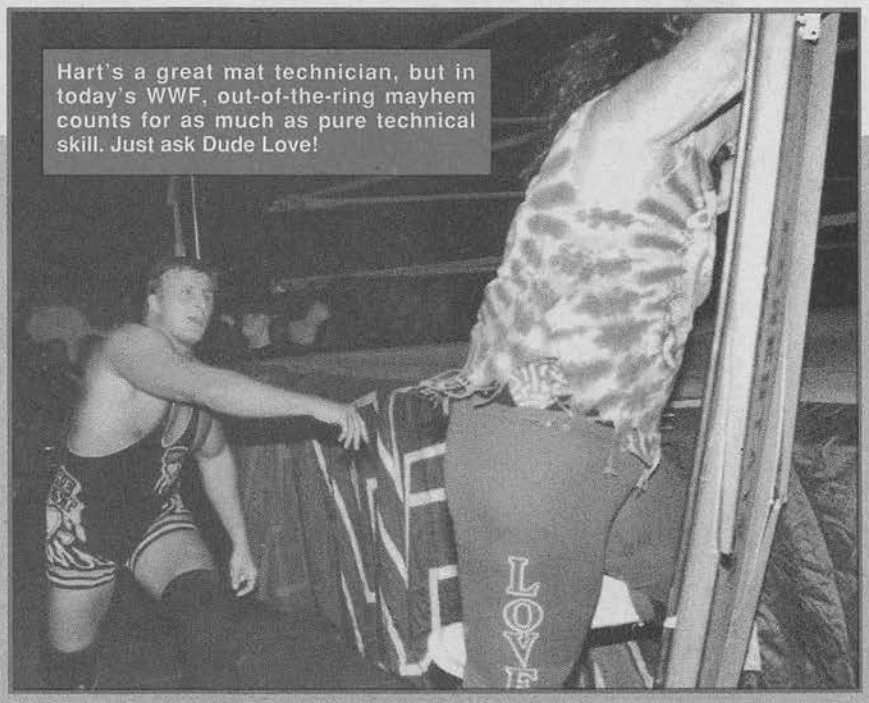
Steve Austin's WWF World title is Hart's ultimate goal. It's one of the few championships he's aimed for that he hasn't won ... yet.

Very clearly, the Nation is involved in an escalating feud with DeGeneration X, which makes sense because they're the two most powerful cliques in the WWF. DeGeneration X caused you so much trouble in your feud with Helmsley, and it's a fair bet that they're not going to back off, especially now that you're with the Nation. Has your war with DeGeneration X intensified?

A: In a word, yes, and let me tell you something: They started this, not me. I was trying to wrestle Helmsley and win the European title, but they couldn't keep their noses out of my business. First it was that freak of nature Chyna, then it was the whole lot of them. "Road Dog." Billy Gunn. X-Pac. Shawn Michaels is a lowlife, and he ain't even around these days. Helmsley for sure. Biggest lowlife of all. If you ask me, DeGeneration X is in big trouble when Michaels comes back, because he's not going to deal with Helmsley's crap. But first things first: DX is going to have to survive the next few months, and I just don't see that happening.

Q: So what's next? You're still after the European title, but it seems to me that you should be in hot pursuit of the World title held by Steve Austin.

A: Helmsley's near the top of my list, but the World title is always the main goal. It's something I've never won, and it's the one thing I want to win. Soon. The way I see it, you stick me in that ring, and you have the Nation watching my back, and there's nothing I can't do. Just watch. I said things were going to change, and if you ask me, they're already changing. There's big stuff ahead. *Big* stuff. And that's all the time I have, so I'm outta here. □

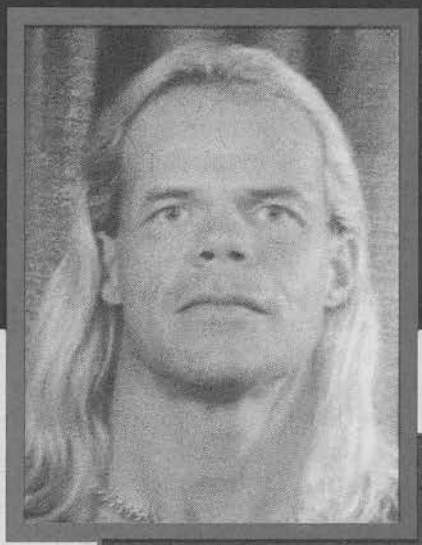


Hart's a great mat technician, but in today's WWF, out-of-the-ring mayhem counts for as much as pure technical skill. Just ask Dude Love!

X-Ray

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

LEX LUGER



Lex Luger "racks" up yet another win with his favorite finisher. Many of our panelists aren't convinced that joining NWO Wolfpac was a smart move by the "Total Package."

CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"Lex Luger has all the tools, daddy—all the tools to be a champ again. But he needs to distance himself from that whole NWO mess. I tell ya, putting on the red and black T-shirt isn't going help his career at all. Not one bit. I know Lex is trying to do right by Sting, but at this stage of his career, Luger needs to focus on a run at the WCW World title, whether his good friend is wearing the belt or not. He might not get another chance for a long time."

Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," has managed 13 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.

KILLER KOWALSKI

"When I hear the name Lex Luger, I think of a guy who is supposed to have all the goods. Maybe he does, but what has he gained by them? A few belts? And what did Luger do after he finally won the WCW World title? He lost it in five days. Five days! Just goes to show you that all those pretty muscles don't amount to very much if you don't know what to do with them. Maybe being part of that Wolfpac thing will give him a boost, but I wouldn't count on it."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the history of the sport, runs a wrestling school in Malden, Massachusetts.

HARLEY RACE

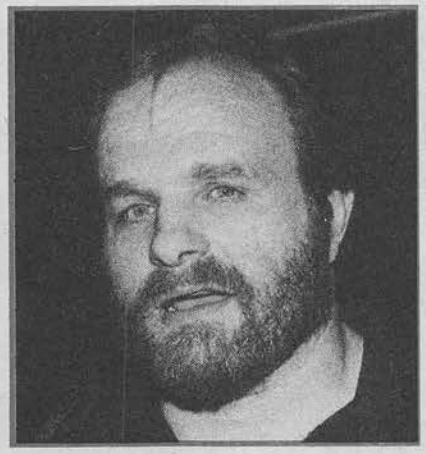
"Although Lex Luger and I have had our ups and downs over the years, few people know the man and the wrestler as well as I do. I've seen what Luger is capable of accomplishing when he puts his mind to it. He is an incredibly gifted wrestler and a tireless competitor who can beat *any* wrestler in the world. However, Lex really needs to get his priorities in order and establish a game plan before his career passes him by. He can't waste any more time."

Harley Race, an eight-time NWA World champion, also managed three-time former WCW World champion and current WWF contender Vader.

FABULOUS MOOLAH

"This stud has it all, darlin'. They don't call him 'Flexy Lexy' for nothin'. And he is as loyal as they come. You really can't blame him for that little episode with Sting a while back; nobody knew who to trust. Even though he's joined Kevin Nash's half of the NWO, he's still tryin' to get rid of The Giant, Hollywood Hogan, and Scott Steiner, and that can't be bad for wrestlin'. Besides, his fans still love him and that means a lot to him."

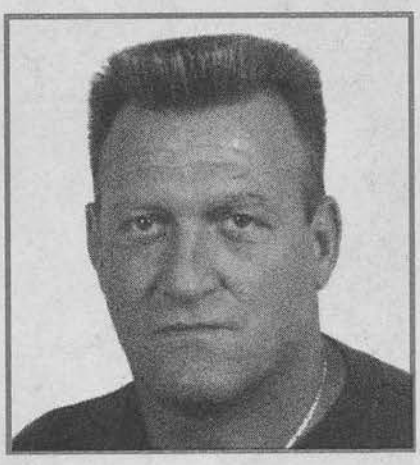
Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She now trains wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina.



OLE ANDERSON

"Lex Luger in the NWO? Give me a break. I've seen this bit before. Luger acts like a real team player at first, but then that narcissist inside him starts to take over. Then, just when things are rolling along, Luger's head swells up. Next thing you know, ol' Lex is whining and causing dissension. He did it when he was with the Horsemen, and I bet he'll do in the NWO. I give Luger a few months at most before The Wolfpac puts him out on his conceited butt."

Ole Anderson, a five-time former NWA World tag team champion and founding member of The Four Horsemen, has been retired for several years.



PAUL ORNDORFF

"Regardless of his affiliation with the NWO, I think Lex is still one of the premier athletes in wrestling. He delivers some of the most devastating clotheslines, and his 'torture rack' is one of the more feared submission holds going. Plus, he can trade punches and kicks with the best brawlers around. When you consider that he's been near the top of his profession for as long as he has, you can see that the nickname 'Total Package' is on the money."

Former WCW TV and World tag team champion Paul Orndorff retired from active competition after suffering a neck injury in December 1995.

Beyond THE SQUARED CIRCLE

▶Grande Wrestling Alliance's visit to Sandy Run Middle School in Dresher, Pennsylvania, on "Career Interest Day" was certainly memorable for teacher Martin Beilin, who is lifted by "Big" Bob Steele. GWA TV champ "Mack Daddy" Ron Starr and Beilin's students look on.

▼ Associate Editor Frank Krewda tries to explain to a visibly displeased Tom Brandi why his name doesn't appear anywhere in last month's ratings.

▲ Wrestling legend Lou Thesz makes a wish as his wife, Charlie, holds his birthday cake. The six-time former NWA World champion and his wife celebrated Lou's 82nd birthday with the staff of THE WRESTLER.

▶Wrestling agent/promoter Elliot Pollack and promoter Les Thatcher present Melanie Pillman with a check for $23,500, all of which was raised at a Brian Pillman Memorial Card. Among those participating in the show were Steve Austin, Chris Jericho, and Sunny.

▶ Buh Buh Ray Dudley proudly shows off his latest acquisition. Aside from beating on Tommy Dreamer and The Sandman, Buh Buh Ray enjoys collecting old cars.

▼Kevin Nash might call himself "Big Sexy," but he certainly doesn't belong in the same picture as Fire, Chae, and Kimberly of the *Nitro* girls. Actually, the girls were looking for a roadie and big Kev was first to volunteer.

▲Former women's champ Penny Banner is still active, although not in the ring. Penny recently placed highest in her age group in a Senior Games Competition swim meet.

▲ Jim Cornette and The Metal Maniac look just as happy to be giving Debbie Combs a foot massage as she is to be getting one after a long night of NWA action in New Jersey.

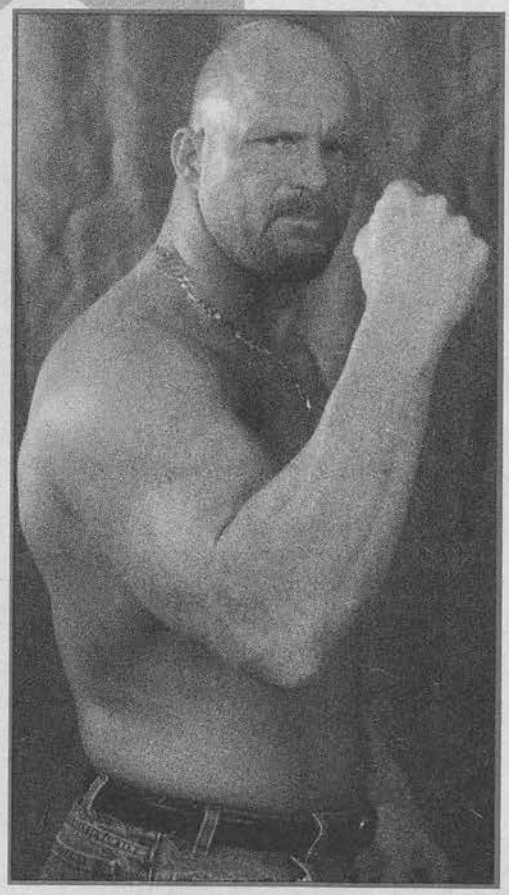
Spot Light ON...

STEVE AUSTIN

ALTHOUGH HIS profanity-laced tirades have come to represent the new WWF "attitude," Steve Austin was actually the first graduate of "Gentleman" Chris Adams' wrestling school in Texas. Adams may have taught him a thing or two about being a wrestler, but he didn't teach him much about being a gentleman.

Within a year of his graduation from wrestling school in 1989, the star pupil turned against his teacher, sparking a feud that also involved Adams' first wife, Jeannie (who was on Austin's side) and Adams' second wife, Toni.

Austin made his WCW debut on May 31, 1991, and defeated Bobby Eaton for the first of his two TV championships only three days later. He later formed The Hollywood Blonds with Brian Pillman, and the two of them defeated Rick Steamboat and Shane Douglas for the WCW tag team belts on March 2, 1993. Austin and Lord Steven Regal (who was subbing for an injured Pillman) lost the belts to Arn Anderson and Paul Roma in August 1993.



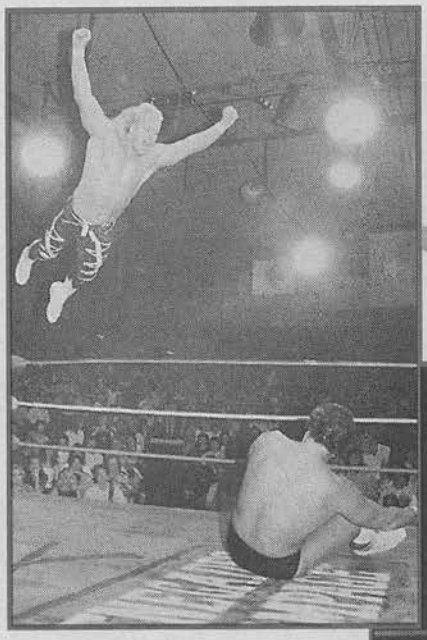
"Stunning" Steve's next big win came at Starrcade '93, when he upended Dustin Rhodes for the U.S. title. Eight months later, Steamboat beat him for the belt. Austin, however, got it back when an injury kept "The Dragon" from defending it at Fall Brawl '94. Unfortunately, that same night, Hacksaw Duggan pinned him for it in just 27 seconds.

A serious knee injury kept Austin out for several months in 1995, and soon after he recovered, Austin moved on to ECW. He only stayed there a few months before joining the WWF as the "Ring Master." He finally began to shine after his manager, Ted DiBiase, left the WWF, and "Stone-Cold" won the 1996 King of the Ring tournament.

Fans began cheering him in the middle of his feud with Bret Hart. Austin fared well in his wars with the entire Hart Foundation and teamed with Shawn Michaels to beat Davey Boy Smith and Owen Hart for the WWF tag team title on May 26, 1997. The team eventually disintegrated, but Austin and Dude Love grabbed the belts in a tournament.

In the most courageous effort of his career, Austin overcame temporary paralysis to pin Owen for the I-C belt at SummerSlam '97, but he was later forced him to relinquish that and his half of the tag team title due to the injury. Austin beat Hart for the belt again at Survivor Series, but this time forfeited it to Rocky Maivia after Vince McMahon berated him for his tactics. Austin ended up throwing the Intercontinental belt into a river.

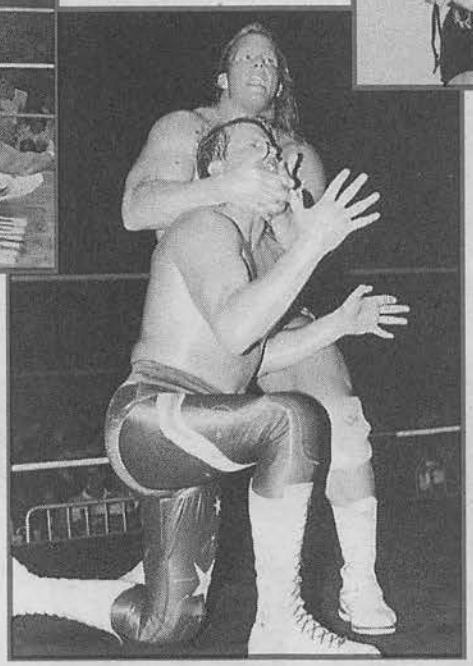
"Stone-Cold" then set his sights on Michaels' World title and dethroned "The Heartbreak Kid" at WrestleMania XIV, just two months after a much-publicized confrontation with Mike Tyson, the guest "enforcer" for the match. Since that victory, Austin has found his stiffest competition in Titan Towers. McMahon is determined to mold him into a corporate stooge. But the fans remain firmly behind their blue-collar hero, whom we proudly feature in our "Spotlight."

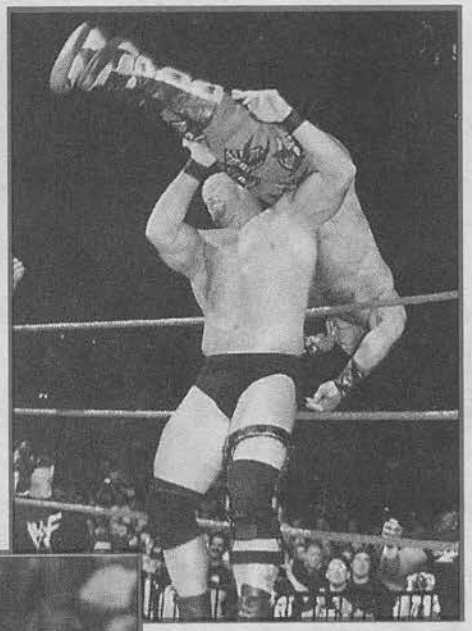


August 1990: Austin splashes Chris Adams. Austin's career has always been enshrouded in controversy. This feud started when Austin turned against the man who trained him.

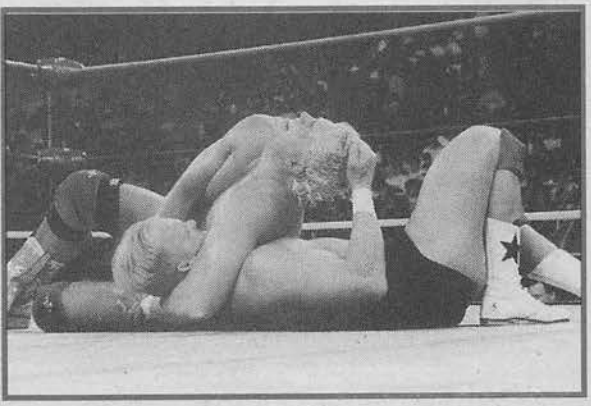
June 1991: Bobby Eaton cannot find a way to escape Austin's chinlock. Austin went on to beat "Beautiful" Bobby for the WCW TV title less than a week after his debut in the federation.

September 1993: Austin and the late Brian Pillman—The Hollywood Blonds—were WCW tag team champs in 1993 but ended up feuding after Austin turned to Col. Robert Parker for guidance.

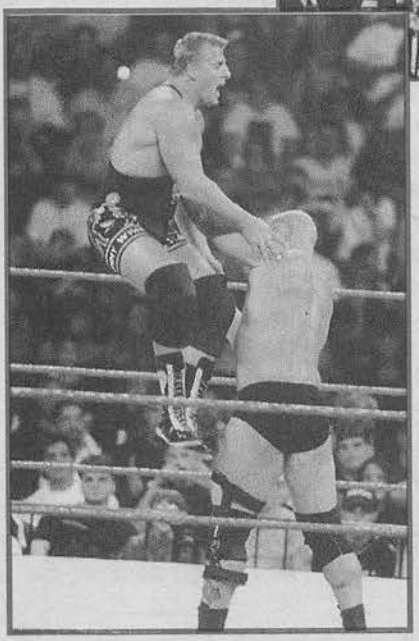




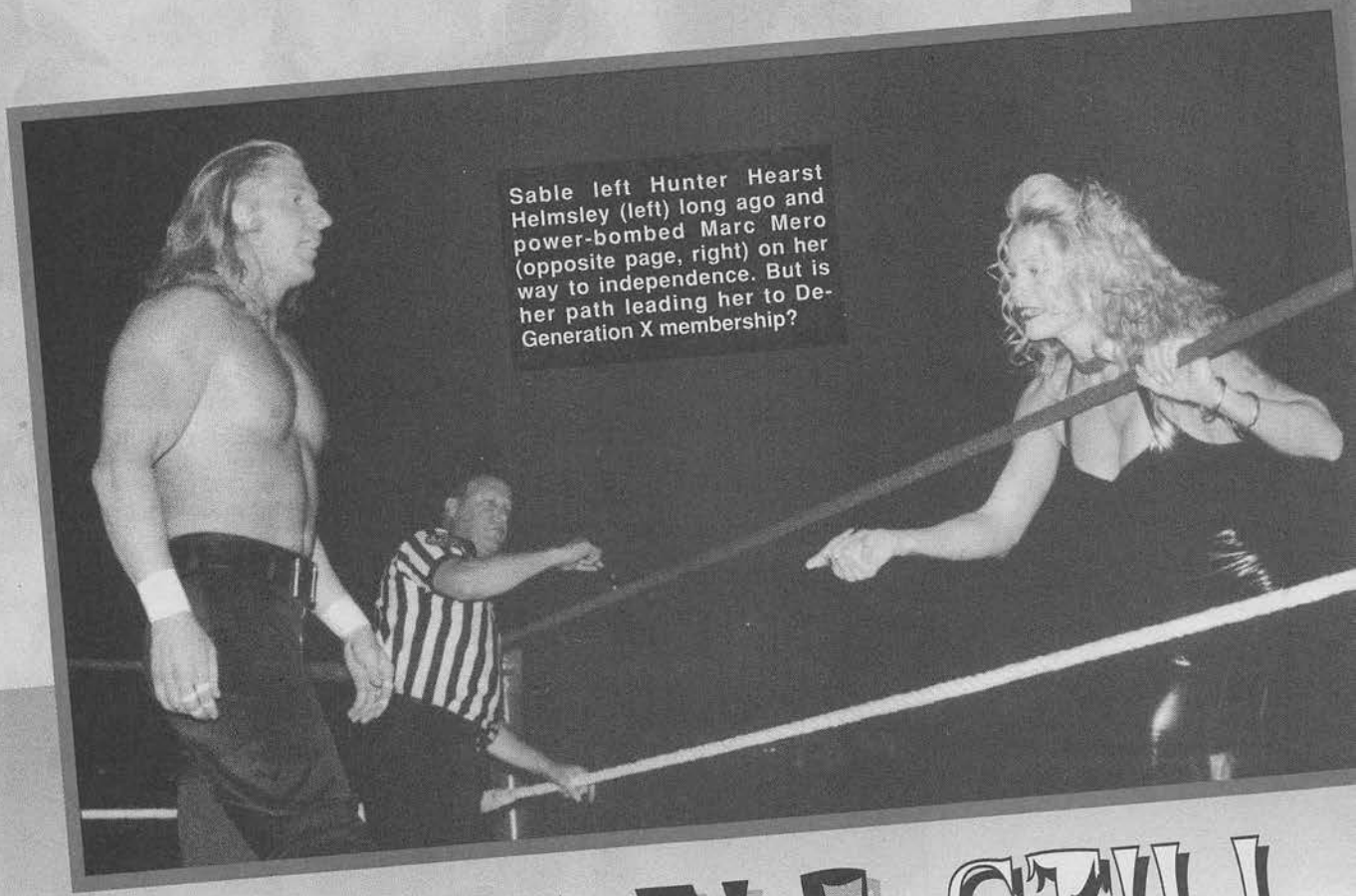
March 1998: Austin sends Shawn Michaels over the top rope at WrestleMania XIV. Austin would go on to win his first WWF World title after nailing HBK with a "Stone-Cold stunner."



December 1993: Even during his WCW days, Austin was never afraid to bend the rules. Here he tugs on the hair of Dustin Rhodes, whom he beat for the U.S. title at Starrcade that year.



August 1997: "Stone-Cold" overcame a crippling piledriver from Owen Hart at SummerSlam to capture the first of his two I-C titles. Austin beat Hart for the belt a second time three months later at Survivor Series.



Sable left Hunter Hearst Helmsley (left) long ago and power-bombed Marc Mero (opposite page, right) on her way to independence. But is her path leading her to DeGeneration X membership?

HHH: "SABLE STILL

By Bryan Ethier

ONCE UPON A time, long before Marc Mero was marvelous and Hunter Hearst Helmsley had perfected the DeGeneration X crotch-chop, an innocent damsel clad in an elegant black evening gown appeared in a wrestling arena. By her side, there stood a huffy, smug aristocrat bedecked in England's finest apparel, his long sandy-blond locks tied back to reveal a haughty, disdainful face. Like the lords and masters of England past, this man named Helmsley squashed this woman's pride by keeping her by his side as a mindless subjugate. She bowed to his manly wishes and lived a life of subservience, wanting for every liberty enjoyed by most free women.

This lovely lady was named Sable, and on the night of WrestleMania XII, her arduous life of oppression abruptly changed. Deep in the bowels of Her Majesty's Arena of Egos, Sir Galahad of Meroville confronted this male chauvinist pig named Hunter Hearst Helmsley and exposed him for what he was and still is: a shameless womanizer.

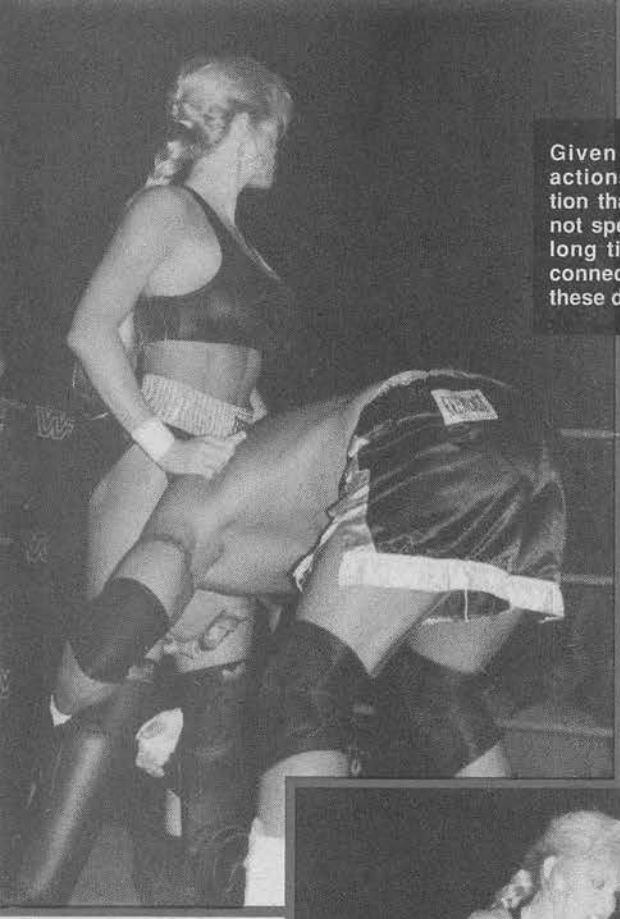
The noble knight Mero restored Sable to her proper standing in society. After Helmsley blamed Sable for his humiliating loss to The Ultimate Warrior, he dragged her to the back of the arena and unleashed a humiliating harangue of insults. This gratuitous verbal assault on Sable tore through Mero's heart. Infuriated, he raced to Sable's aid. With a slashing left hand and a bruising uppercut, he sent "Triple-H" to the bleachers, forever releasing Sable from her bonds.

A night later, he rode off with the curvaceous blonde. Meanwhile, Helmsley slithered away in pursuit of other innocent victims. Today, he reigns as monarch in the lewd DeGeneration X.

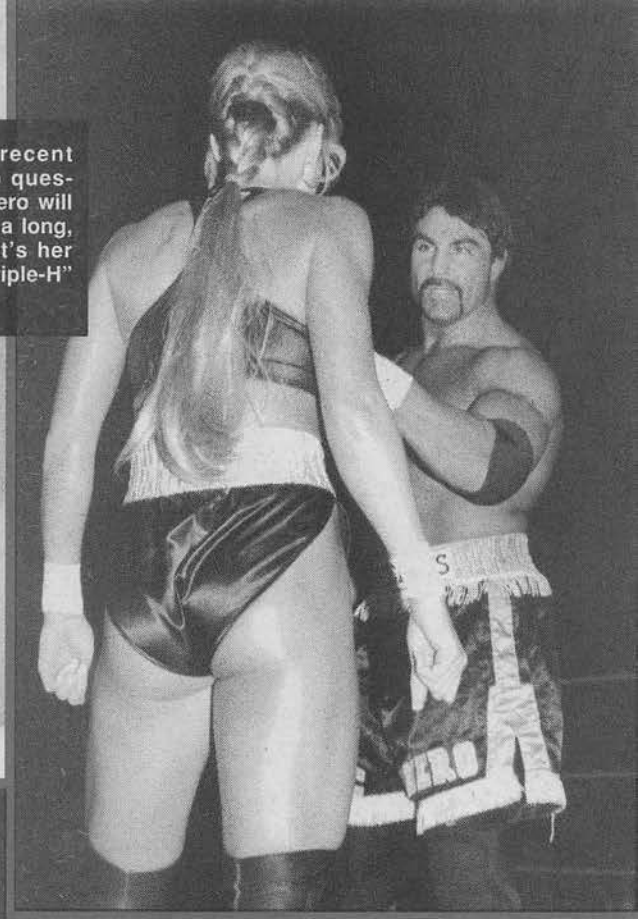
While most wrestling fans kept a close eye on the growing dissent between Sable and Mero that finally exploded into a breakup in May, a few insiders privately inti-

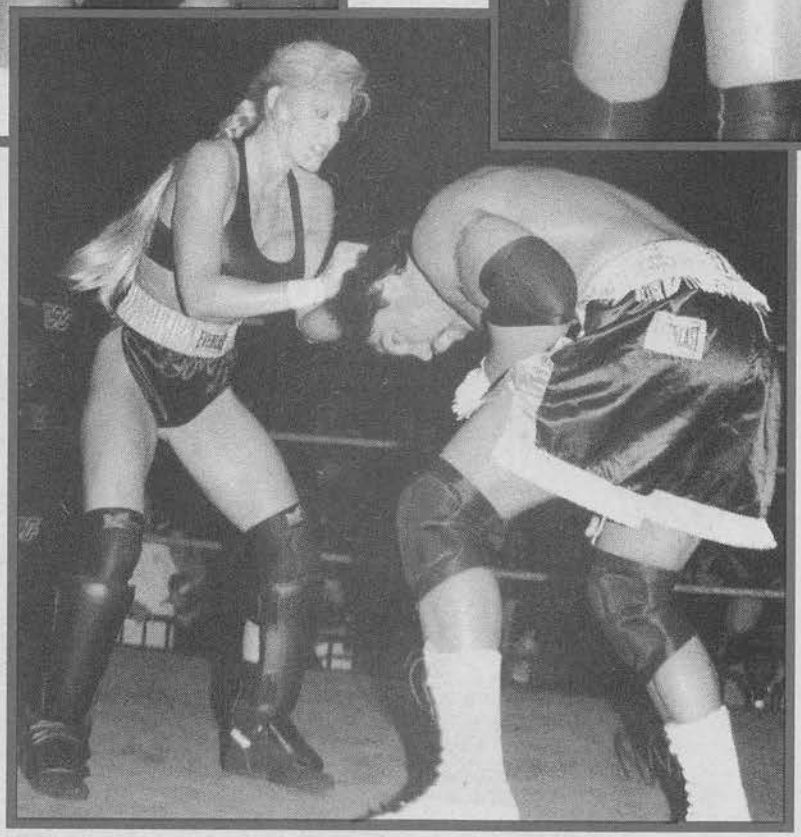
HAS SOME DX IN HER!

Two years ago, Sable was just one of many saucy women in Hunter Hearst Helmsley's stable of valets and groupies. Who knew back then that she had the guts required to be in DeGeneration X? "Triple-H" did!



Given Sable's recent actions, there's no question that she and Mero will not speak again for a long, long time. But what's her connection with "Triple-H" these days?





mated that she and Helmsley may retain a semblance of their ill-begotten relationship from the mid-1990s.

"Remember, the two of them spent a long time together," said one WWF wrestler. "You don't steal a woman from another man and expect her not to have some feelings for the other guy. I always sensed a kind of tension between Sable and Helmsley. Now I'm starting to see a different side of Sable. She's not that innocent girl Mero rode off with the night of WrestleMania XII."

After enduring many months of humiliation and oppression from Mero (ironically similar to what she bore from Helmsley), Sable came into her own as both a personality and a competitor. She took to the mat with Luna and publicly stood up to her former friend and sideman—by slamming a well-placed boot into Mero's groin.

Throughout this dramatic transformation, Sable was one of the most outspoken performers in the WWF. With her entry into wrestling society, other women performers such as Chyna and Luna have assumed a more aggressive role in the sport. Sunny, always a highly respected manager, is back in the limelight, too, heading the popular LOD 2000.

Sable had to leave the WWF after Mero duped her and pinned her at the Over the Edge pay-per-view, but just before this magazine went to press, THE WRESTLER heard from several people close to Sable. They revealed that she had been in contact with some very powerful lawyers and would likely be seeking a way to return to the

federation in some capacity.

"Sable really did change a lot in a very short time," said WWF broadcaster Michael Cole. "Maybe something about her previous relationship with 'Triple-H' had something to do with that. I really don't know."

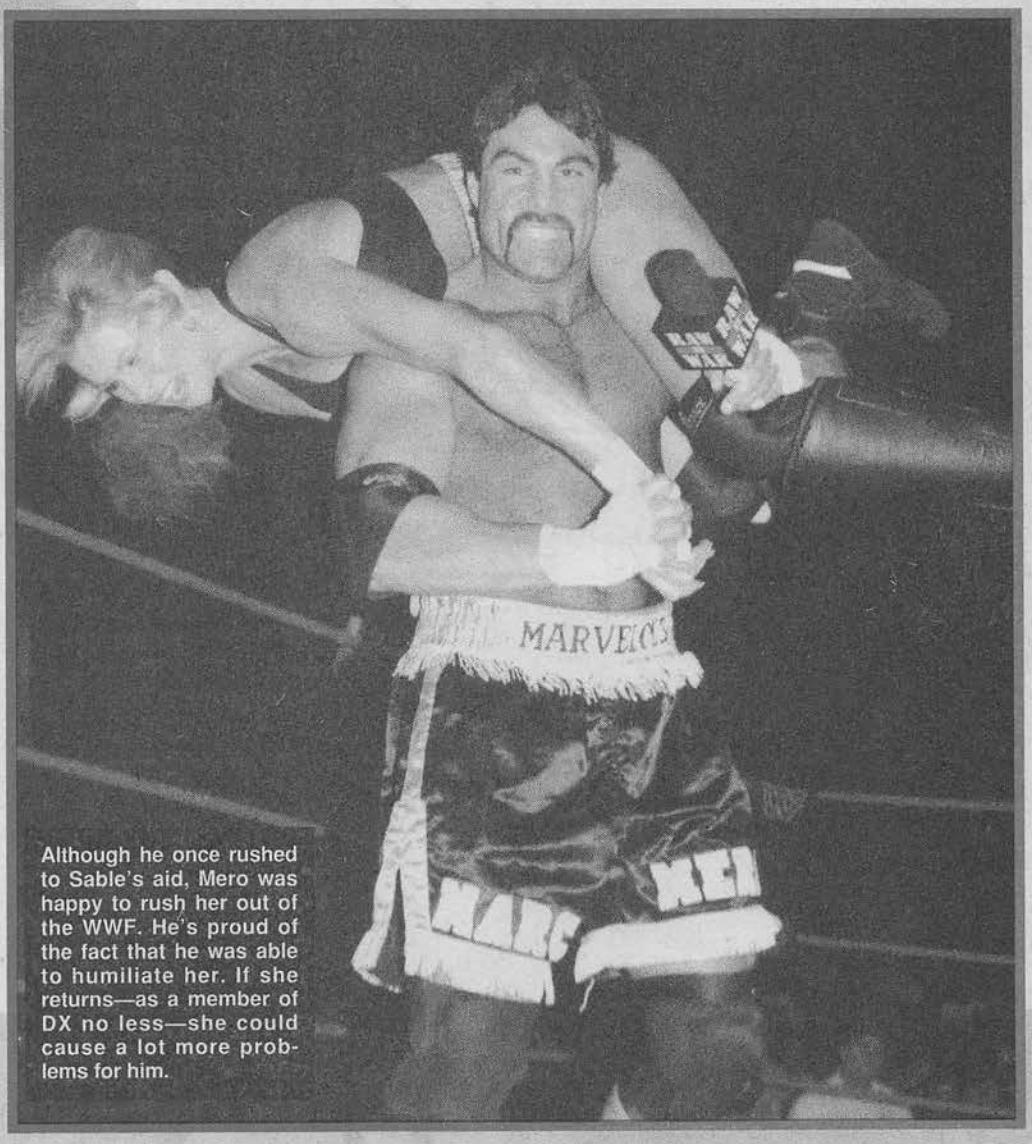
Maybe it did. Little has been disclosed about the Hunter-Sable relationship. One should also consider that two years ago, Hunter was considered more stuffy and arrogant than rude or offensive. The lewd, boorish side of his personality manifested quickly after he began to team with the abrasive and sophomorically vulgar Shawn Michaels.

"Don't let appearances deceive you," he said. "I have always been 'Triple-H,' head of DX, even when DX was just a dream of mine. You loathsome swine needed to be roused from your emotional impotence before I could cut my swath in the WWF. Now you know who you're dealing with. Sable knew who she was dealing with. Has it ever dawned on your pea-sized brains why she stood quietly at my side? Because she knows the kind of man 'Triple-H' was ... and is."

Helmsley will always be a degenerate at heart—that is, if you believe him and his colleagues. (And based on his antisocial behavior, who wouldn't believe it?) But does that make Sable a candidate for DX-hood if she does get reinstated?

Sable's past is as rife with rumor and speculation as that of this nation's current President. Some believe she led an underground feminist movement before linking with "Triple-H." Others believe she engineered a friendship with Helmsley simply to get her toe in wrestling's door, that her plan all along was to start a women's wrestling supergroup.

And of Helmsley's appraisal of his former underling?



Although he once rushed to Sable's aid, Mero was happy to rush her out of the WWF. He's proud of the fact that he was able to humiliate her. If she returns—as a member of DX no less—she could cause a lot more problems for him.

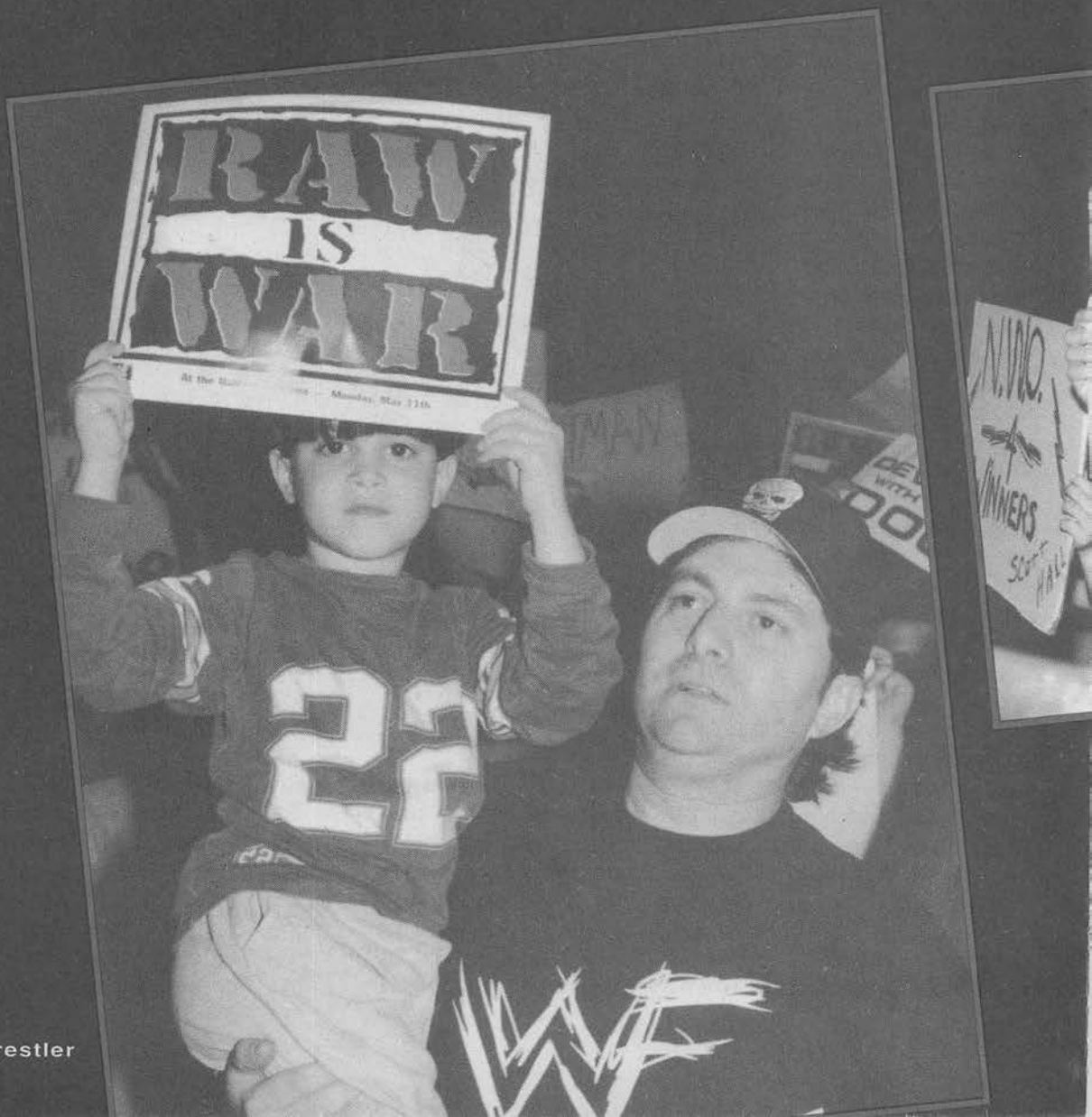
"Don't be fooled by the pretty smile—Sable still has some DX in her!" Helmsley told us. "She's got the smarts to leave a guy who's no good. What's more exciting than a woman kicking some loser in the groin? You ever ask yourself where she learned to stand up on her own? From me, that's who! If she comes back, maybe we'll have a spot open for her."

Hideous as it may seem, Helmsley paints a picture of a blossoming wrestling star who would fit into DX. Sable is controversial, headstrong, and opinionated. She takes no guff from anyone, and she pays attention only to those she deems worthy of her time.

Since WrestleMania XII, she has become a smirking, snarling lioness, adored by the fans as the WWF's new maverick. But if her latent DX personality further asserts itself, how long will it before the fans' hoots and hollers change to boos and catcalls? □

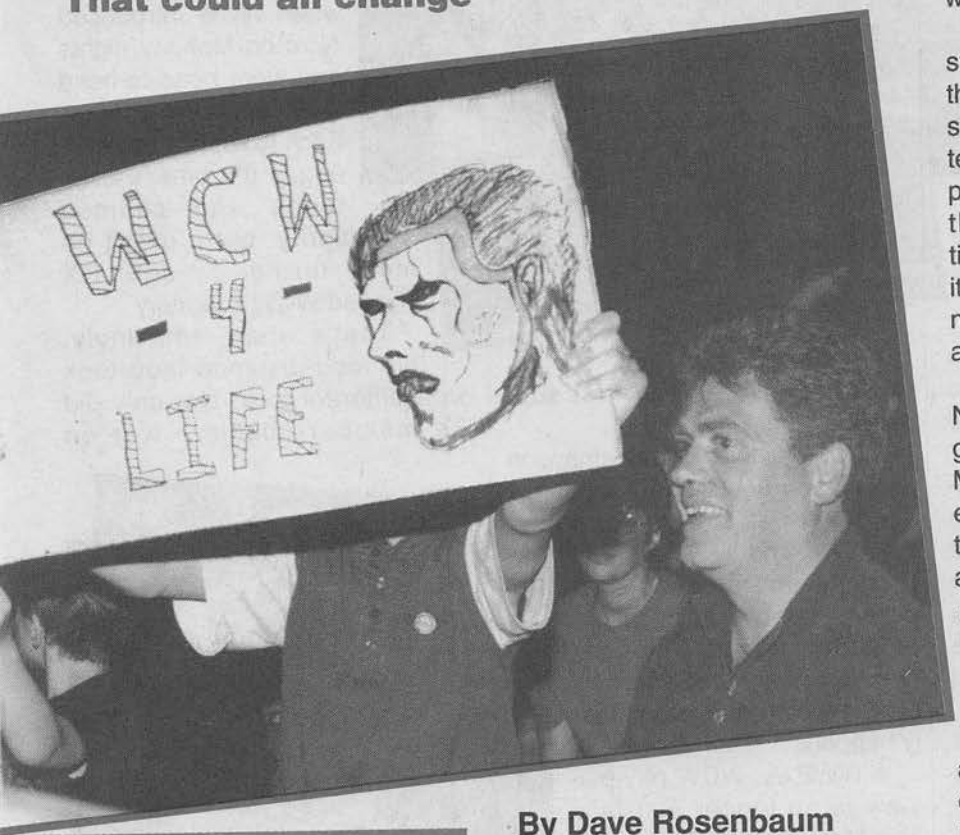
THE MOTHER OF

A WWF VS. WCW SUPERCARD IS NO LONGER JUST TALK!



ALL PAY-PER-VIEWS!

Never inevitable, always seemingly impossible, the idea of WCW and WWF wrestlers competing against each other has only been the province of dream matches. That could all change



Most fans make it very clear which promotion they like best. They might soon get to root on their favorite wrestlers in the mother of all pay-per-views.

By Dave Rosenbaum

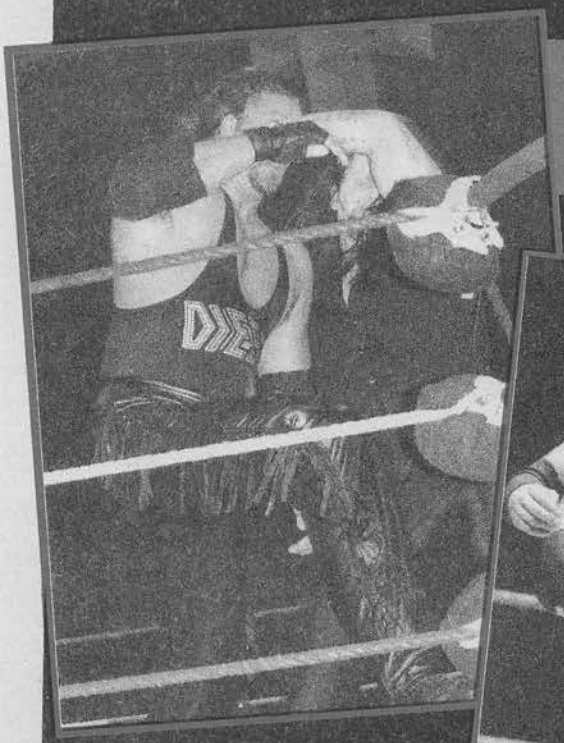
MIKE NATHANSON IS a wrestling fan from Baltimore, Maryland, right smack in the middle of traditional WWF and WCW territory, and if you ask him which federation he likes more, he'll ask you, "Who's wrestling tonight?" Every Monday night, he tapes *Nitro* and watches *Raw*, except for the times when he tapes *Raw* and watches *Nitro*. *Thunder* won out over *Seinfeld* every time. Pay-per-views? Deep pockets Nathanson gets 'em all. He eats, drinks, and sleeps wrestling.

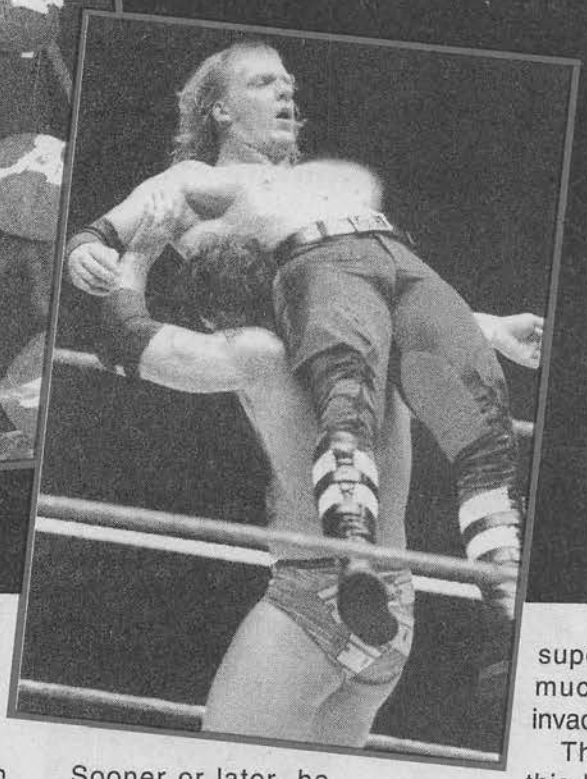
But as much as this 23-year-old steel worker loves his wrestling, there's one thing he won't let himself think about. It's too much of a tease. He knows it will never happen, so why bother giving it any thought? Besides, there were times in the past when he thought it might happen, but it didn't. He's not going to get disappointed again.

"A WWF vs. WCW supercard?" Nathanson asked. "No way. Never gonna happen. First of all, Vince McMahon and Eric Bischoff hate each other too much to ever work together on anything. Second of all, it has never happened, so why should it happen now, just when they're in the middle of this huge war? Don't even bother me with this. Yeah, I know there are rumblings again, but I don't believe any of it. If it ever happens, you can bet I'll be there, but it ain't happening."

We ran into Mr. Nathanson during a WWF card at Baltimore Arena in mid-May, just when the rumblings were turning into rumors and the rumors were threatening to turn into action.

A few weeks earlier, DeGeneration X had launched its verbal attack on WCW outside the Scope





The Undertaker probably wouldn't mind taking on Kevin Nash again (left), and maybe Scott Hall would enjoy another friendly match with Hunter Hearst Helmsley (below).

in Norfolk, Virginia, where WCW was holding *Nitro*.

"Let our people go!" chanted the WWF wrestlers, a reference to former WWF stars Kevin Nash and Scott Hall who, according to DX's X-Pac, are being held hostage in WCW by Eric Bischoff.

A few weeks later, DX members visited the CNN Center in Atlanta dressed in battle gear and asking to see Ted Turner. Their visit to WCW headquarters prompted WCW Executive Vice President Nick Lambros to call 911. The next night, Bischoff challenged McMahon to wrestle him at Slamboree '98 the following Sunday in Worcester, Massachusetts, just a few hours away from the WWF's offices in Stamford, Connecticut. McMahon never showed up (Bischoff should have known that after receiving a letter from WWF's lawyers ordering him to desist from suggesting that McMahon would be at Slamboree) and Bischoff claimed victory by forfeit.

Sooner or later, he might have to defend that supposed victory.

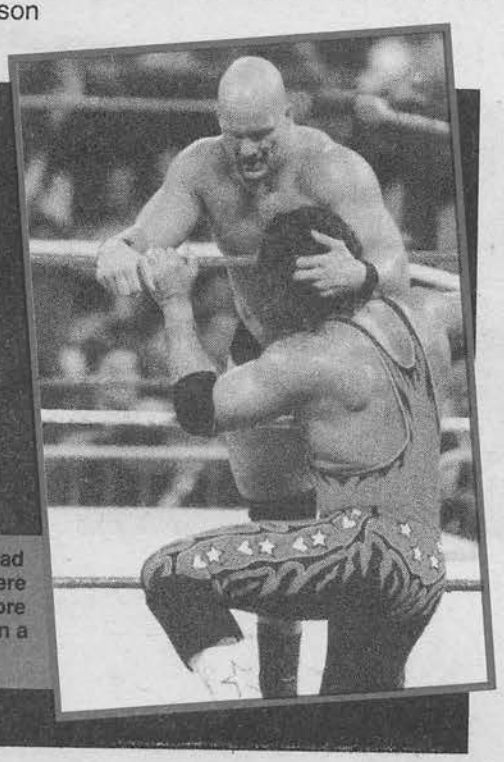
Now hear this, Mike Nathanson and all you wrestling fans out there: After all these years of the WWF and WCW warring, feuding, and stealing each other's talent—after all the lawsuits, threats, Monday night ratings wars, and pay-per-view battles, it might finally happen.

A WWF vs. WCW pay-per-view is no longer just talk. The Mother of All Supercards could happen ... if everything falls into place.

"I don't know if it's that close to happening," said one WWF official, "but if you asked me six months ago if I thought any of our wrestlers would show up at CNN Center, I would have laughed, so maybe we are getting close."

For decades, the WWF and WCW didn't even recognize each other. You could have watched every single minute of every single WWF and NWA/WCW card in the 1970s, 1980s, and early-'90s and not heard a single mention of the rival federation. That changed when WCW introduced *Nitro* on Monday nights and went head-to-head with the WWF's *Raw*. Each federation acknowledged the other's existence and claimed superiority, but it didn't go much further ... until DX invaded WCW's territory.

That's when, amazingly, this long-distance feud took on a different look. Not only did DX members declare war on



You thought the matches Bret Hart had with Steve Austin in 1996 and '97 were intense? We think they'd be a lot more intense if they wrestled each other on a WCW vs. WWF pay-per-view.

Vader never did earn a victory over Hulk Hogan when they feuded in WCW in 1995. There still could be a chance for him.

WCW, but their declaration was aired on *Raw*. Bischoff's response was unprecedented, too, as was his insistence that he wouldn't apologize to Sean Waltman, whom he had fired earlier in the year.

Here was real conversation between these two giant federations. Not just "our federation is better than your federation" talk, but real conversation over real issues: Waltman's firing, the contract status of Nash and Hall, Lambros calling 911, Bischoff challenging McMahon to a match, WWF lawyers responding, Bischoff reading the lawyers' letter on *Thunder*, and this: WWF and WCW stars—Steve Austin, Chris Jericho, Chris Benoit, and Sunny to be specific—appearing together to raise money at a Brian Pillman memorial card in Norwood, Ohio.

At Slamboree '98, Bischoff and WCW officials held out hope that McMahon would appear, even though he had given no indication that he would. The "Vinnie Mac cam" was backstage waiting to catch a glimpse of the WWF owner if he had shown up. He didn't. Ring announcer Michael Buffer announced Bischoff's opponent as McMahon.

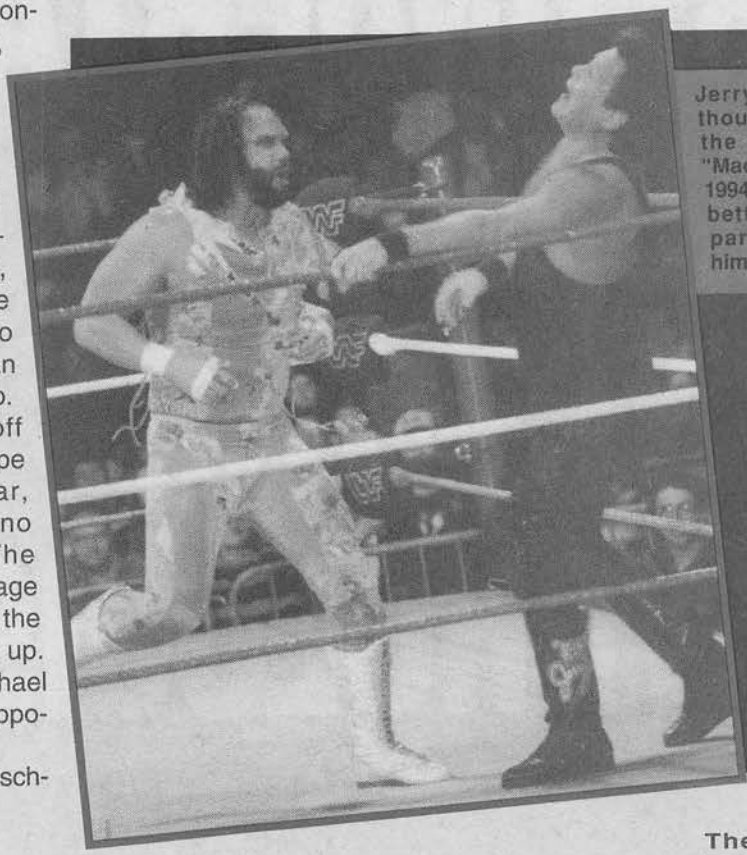
Still, it's not McMahon vs. Bischoff that wrestling fans crave, although that would be fine, too.

"I'd like to see them kick the crap out of each other," Nathanson said. "But what I really want is DeGeneration X vs. NWO. Austin vs. Hogan, or maybe Austin vs. Goldberg. Sting vs. Shamrock. Helmsley vs. Savage. The Legion of Doom vs. Hall and Nash. No-disqualification, no-countout matches. I don't think either federation has the guts to go through with it."

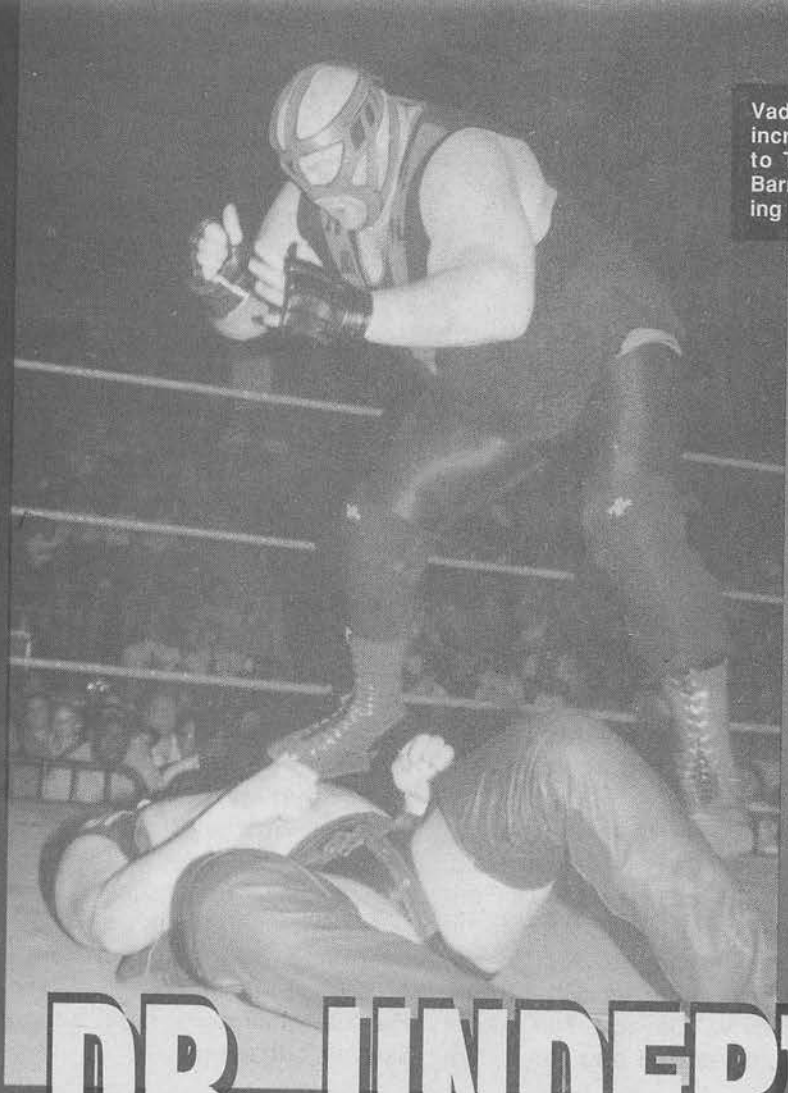
Nathanson might be right. Talk to WCW insiders and they'll tell you McMahon won't go through with the card. Talk to WWF officials and they'll tell you Bischoff really wants no part of the WWF. Turner has stayed away from the issue, but he would have to give the final stamp of approval. WCW can't get into bed with the WWF until Turner says it's okay.

"The key is getting both sides to sit down and talk," said a WCW insider. "So far, that hasn't happened. I don't know what would happen if you put McMahon and Bischoff at opposite sides of a table. They'd probably try to kill each other. But holding a joint pay-per-view would be a very complicated venture, and it would require a lot of negotiating."

So far, only initial shots have been fired. Nobody has sat down for a truce. It might never happen. But there has never been a more likely time than now. □



Jerry Lawler thought he saw the last of the "Macho Man" in 1994. "The King" better get prepared to see him again.



Vader is once again displaying incredible killer instinct, thanks to The Undertaker (although Barry Windham won't be thanking Undertaker anytime soon).

DR. UNDERTAKER: VADER'S PSYCHOTIC PSYCHOLOGIST!

What went on during the three months Vader was recuperating from Kane's assault with a deadly weapon? Ask Undertaker: He created a new man to help destroy his little brother!

By Bryan Ethier

PERHAPS THE MOST disheartening aspect of those two idle months was overcoming the initial feelings of hopelessness and desperation.

I'm the invalid now, the once-indestructible Vader thought shortly after undergoing orbital surgery. Days earlier, the wrench wielded by Kane had shattered the bone surrounding Vader's eye; it had also splintered an ego larger than his massive frame. *I'm the one who can't lift his head. I'm the one being ridiculed.*

So mused a rueful, crestfallen Vader as he began his involuntary medical hiatus. The madman who had made a living crushing the bones of others found himself powerless, unable to exert enough strength to crush a chicken bone, much less the spine of a top 10 contender.

Vader sweated and hyperventilated night after agonizing night following that awful February evening when Kane raised his arm and slammed the wrench—in this case it was used as a genuine power tool—into the face of his nemesis. Dark, spiritless nights when Vader began to wonder, *Do I still have what it takes to be a winner?*

He had never been a loser in the WWF, but he had also never been the juggernaut and champion that had stalked WCW like Godzilla in midtown Manhattan. Vader's clutch on the federation's upper rungs became even more tenuous when Kane sent him spinning into an unconscious void. Vader might have completely tossed in the proverbial towel and retired were it not for the support and comfort of an unlikely ally: The Undertaker.

In an exclusive interview with THE WRESTLER, a WWF insider familiar with the unique agreement sown between the two termed Undertaker's support "absolutely vital" to Vader's welfare.

"I sincerely doubt Vader would be back in the ring at this time were it not for Undertaker's inspiration and his moral and psychological support," said the source. "Undertaker visited Vader frequently, and he worked to rebuild the man's badly bruised, ego."

The two questions you might be asking yourself are why ... and how?

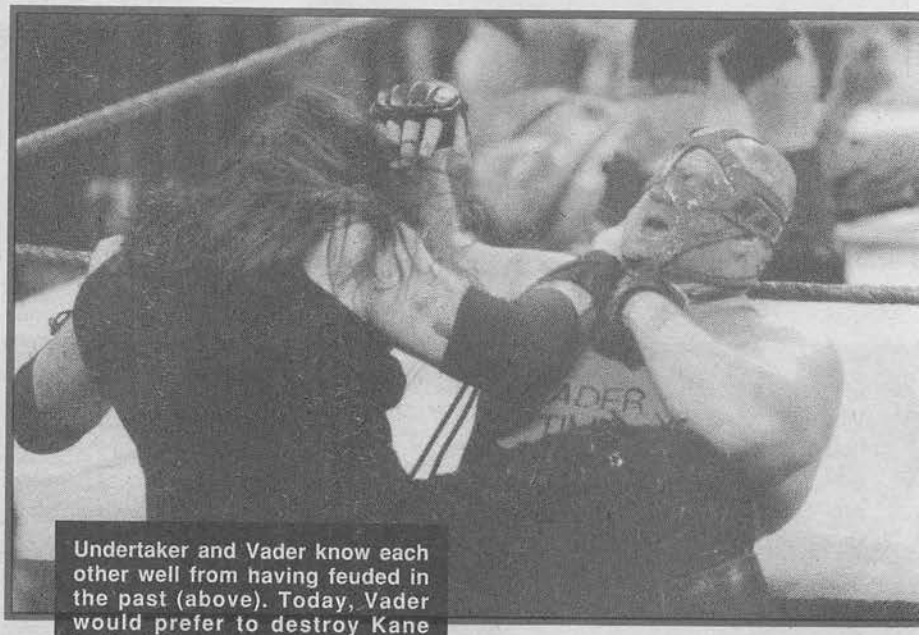
The *why* is relatively understandable: Undertaker and Vader both hate Kane. Both men have been wronged by the nefarious grappler; both have sought revenge. For Undertaker, what better way to deal with his brother than to have an outsider inflict the damage on his behalf? By using Vader as a hitman of sorts, Undertaker can rid himself of his chief rival, perhaps the only man alive capable of forever burying Undertaker seven feet under.

So for Undertaker, serving as Vader's chief psychoanalyst was in fact a wise business decision.

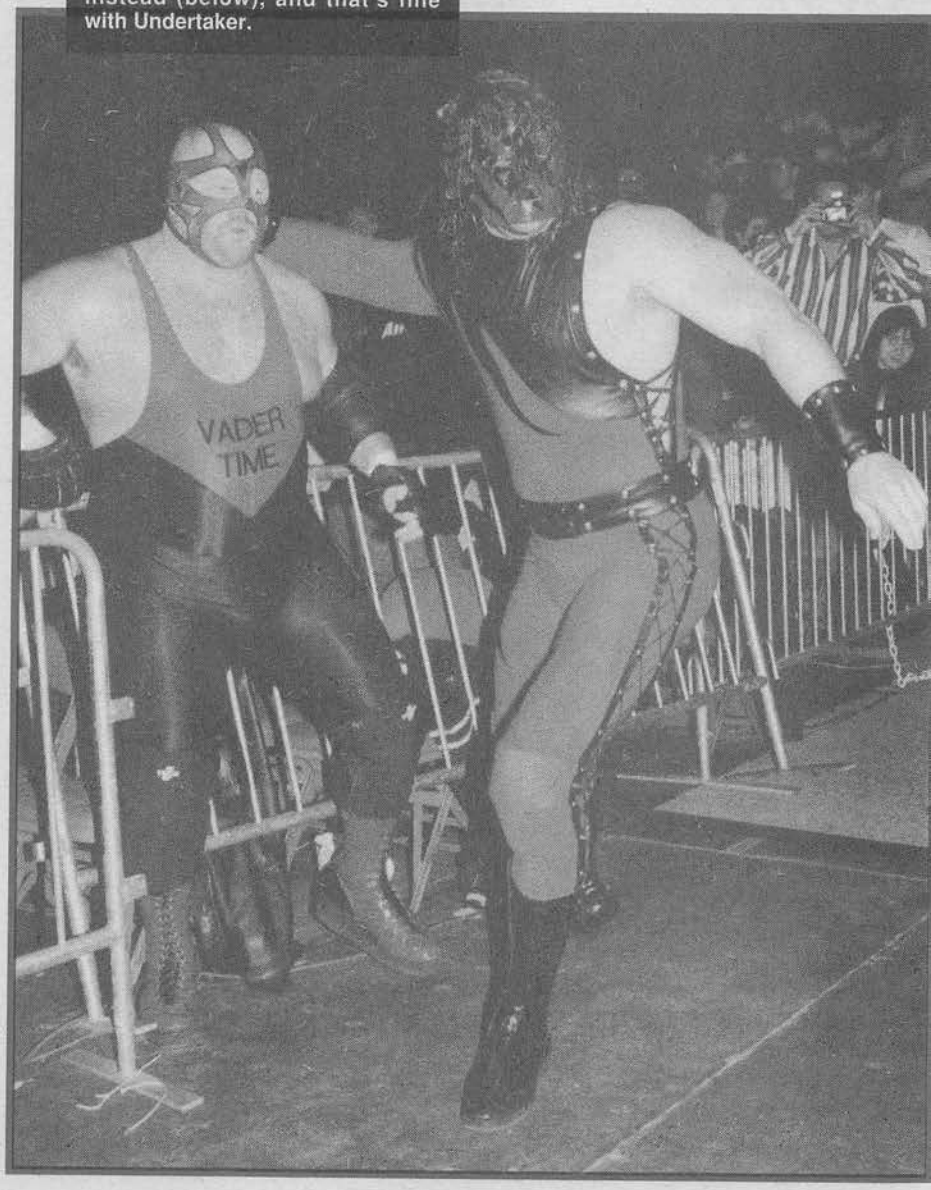
The *how* is a bit more complicated. To understand Dr. Undertaker's *modus operandi*, one must fully appreciate the desperate state of mind Vader was in.

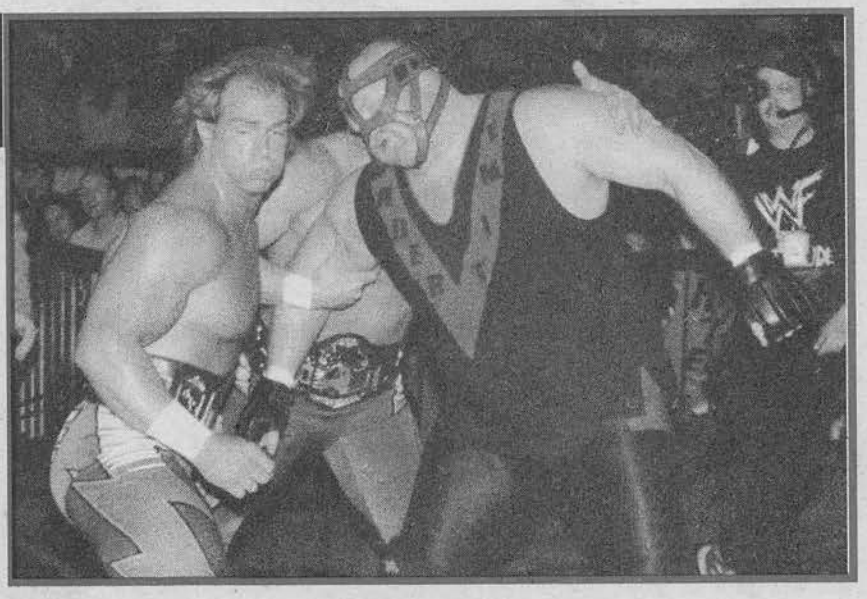
"He was listless for weeks at a time, unable to move off his couch," said our source. "He saw little hope of returning to his prior form, and it was all because of the Kane incident."

Bleak, indeed. According to our informant, Undertaker and Vader met at a secret location. For 45 minutes a session, the souls of Vader and Undertaker were locked, as if the two men were emotionally—and totally—dependent on each other. In a sense they were, and the image of Kane served as their emotional umbilical cord. In layman's terms, Undertaker helped Vader reclaim his self-worth by conquering the emotional demons that had nearly slain him weeks earlier. Using Kane as the focal point, Undertaker took Vader through a series of cognitive reconditioning therapies.



Undertaker and Vader know each other well from having feuded in the past (above). Today, Vader would prefer to destroy Kane instead (below), and that's fine with Undertaker.





Bob Holly seems to be trying to wake a sleeping Vader. The fact is, though, Vader has reawakened—and the entire WWF should beware!

"It sounds very much as if Undertaker helped Vader draw strength by sublimating the patient's helplessness first into anger, then into incredible intensity," said noted wrestling psychologist Dr. Sidney M. Basil. "As Vader's contempt for Kane grew, his confidence and determination blossomed. Kane became the emotional dart board into which Vader hurled darts of fear, then resentment, then anger, and finally power. With every emotional dart thrown, Vader became that much more emotionally revived."

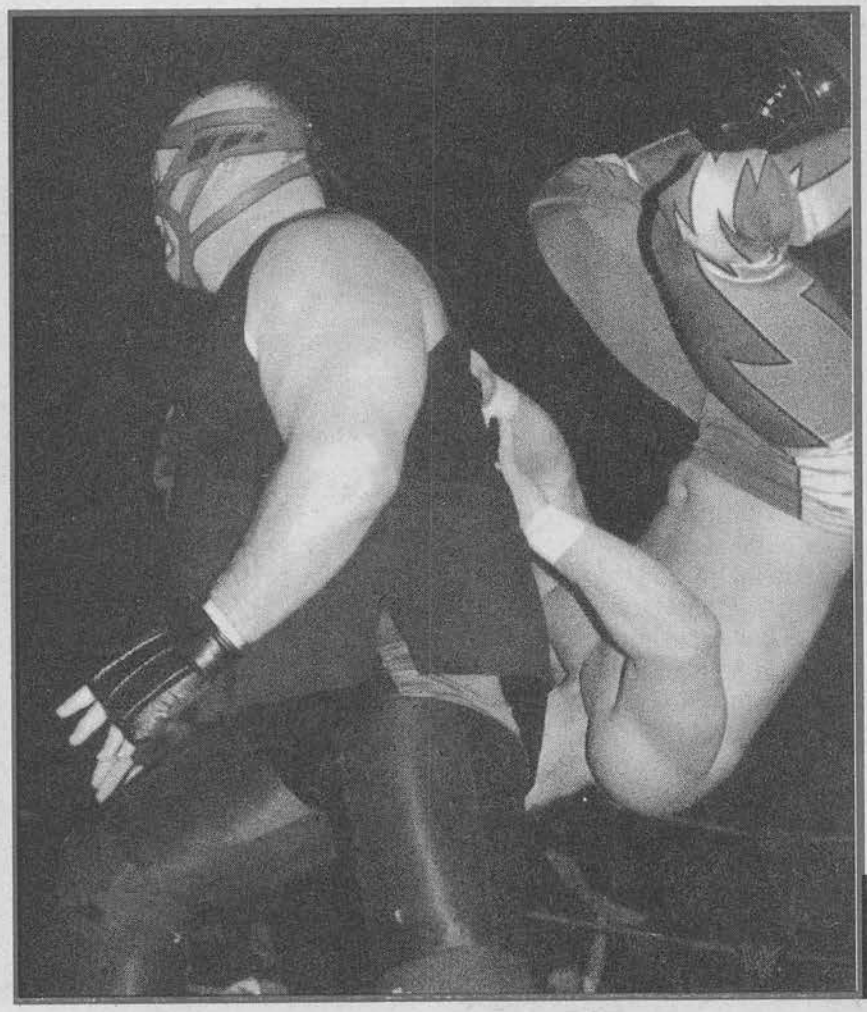
According to those close to the former WWF champ, Undertaker has also benefited from the one-on-one counseling, for it has sharpened his focus against his brother. The doubt that once paralyzed him from launching a full assault against Kane has vanished. Look for a meaner, sharper Undertaker in the future.

Meanwhile, Vader looks more imposing than ever. He has already rushed to Undertaker's aid in their battle against Paul Bearer and Kane. One WWF matchmaker disclosed recently that Vader has turned down matches against other top-flight wrestlers in order to be at arenas that feature Kane-Undertaker matches.

"There is no question Vader is reborn and Undertaker is rejuvenated," said our source. "The only thing one should be concerned over is whether Undertaker's therapy has had a hypnotic effect on Vader. Is Vader obsessing over Kane? If so, that could be a bad sign. But it's too early to say; for now, I'd say Undertaker has served him well."

Vader is healed physically; that can be documented by consulting recent X-rays. Mentally, as the result of Undertaker's support and assistance, his hopelessness and desperation have been replaced by ferocity and determination.

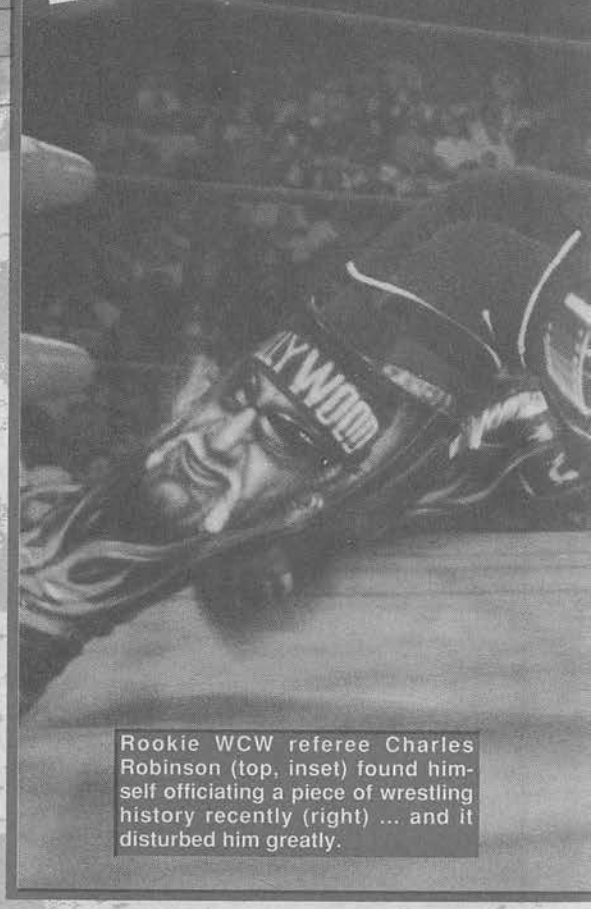
Perhaps Dr. Undertaker *is* the ideal emotional healer. After all, he certainly succeeded in raising Vader's killer instinct from the dead. □



Masked for mayhem, Vader flips Bart Gunn to the canvas on the way to yet another brutally impressive win.

Referee's Report:

Charles Robinson is a young WCW referee who, on May 11, was assigned to a *Nitro* showdown between Randy Savage and Hollywood Hogan. It's a match he'll never forget



Rookie WCW referee Charles Robinson (top, inset) found himself officiating a piece of wrestling history recently (right) ... and it disturbed him greatly.

By Dave Rosenbaum

THERE WAS NOTHING that could keep Randy Savage from confronting WCW World champion Hollywood Hogan on this night. But when he got off his plane in Kansas City, Missouri, earlier in the day, he was limping slightly. And when he arrived at Kemper Arena, he was limping. And when he came out to issue a challenge to Hogan, he was limping. And when he left the locker room for his match with Hogan, he was limping. And while he tried to disguise the limp and walk normally down the runway to the ring, there was no disguising the pain on his face ... or the determination.

It would be the right kind of night for Savage, a winning night, although he didn't regain the World title he had lost so painfully to Hogan less than a month earlier. It would be a night when the decades of injuries and pain he had endured since his pro debut in 1973 would all show on his face.

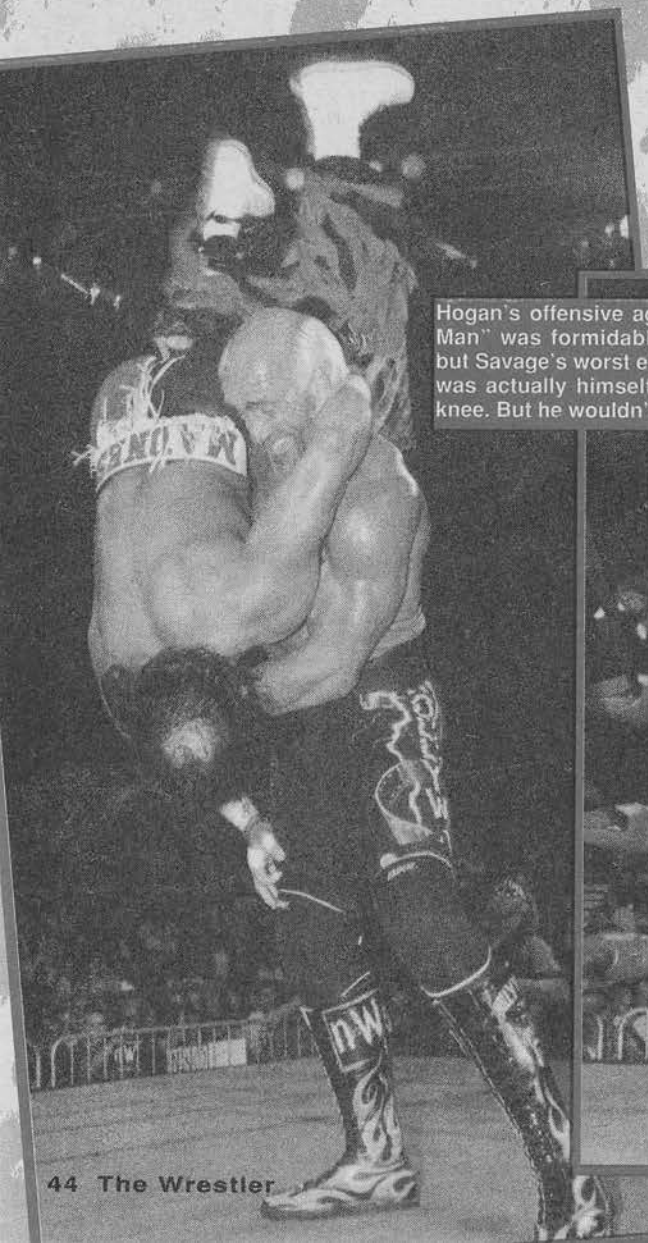
Nothing could keep Savage from his match against

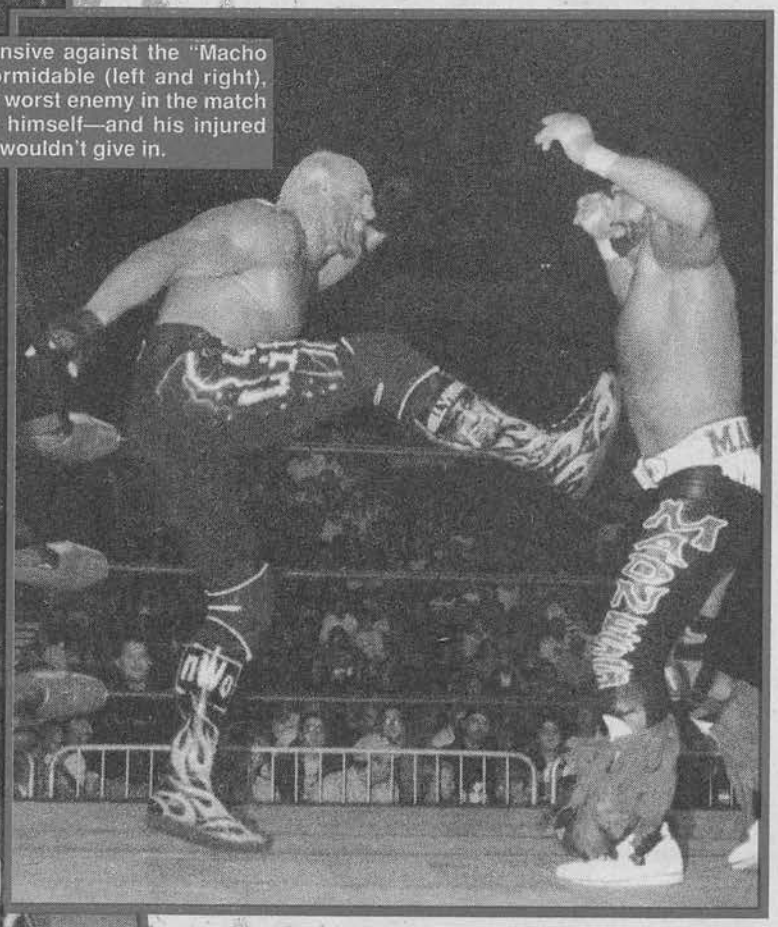
"I'VE NEVER SEEN PAIN LIKE I SAW IN SAVAGE'S FACE!"

Hollywood Hogan takes one giant step toward eliminating Randy Savage during the May 11 edition of *Nitro*. Robinson wanted to stop the match, but he felt an obligation to let Savage go on.

Hogan. He knew all day long that Hogan would accept his challenge, and he did. And six days later, nothing could keep Savage from his match against hated rival Bret Hart, although the best he could do was beat the "Hitman" by disqualification after Hogan interfered. For weeks, the "Macho Man" had been living up to his nickname, enduring pain that few men could endure. He was wrestling with a partially torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee that would have kept any sane man prone in his easy chair *watching* wrestling matches instead of competing in them.

Savage will not discuss the pain he is enduring. He won't give his enemies the satisfaction. He knows nothing would please Bret Hart more than to hear Savage say, "I'm hurting. I can barely sleep at night. When I wrestle, I feel like somebody's sticking 1,000 needles in my knee. It's almost unendurable." We know this to be true, because that's the way people with





Hogan's offensive against the "Macho Man" was formidable (left and right), but Savage's worst enemy in the match was actually himself—and his injured knee. But he wouldn't give in.

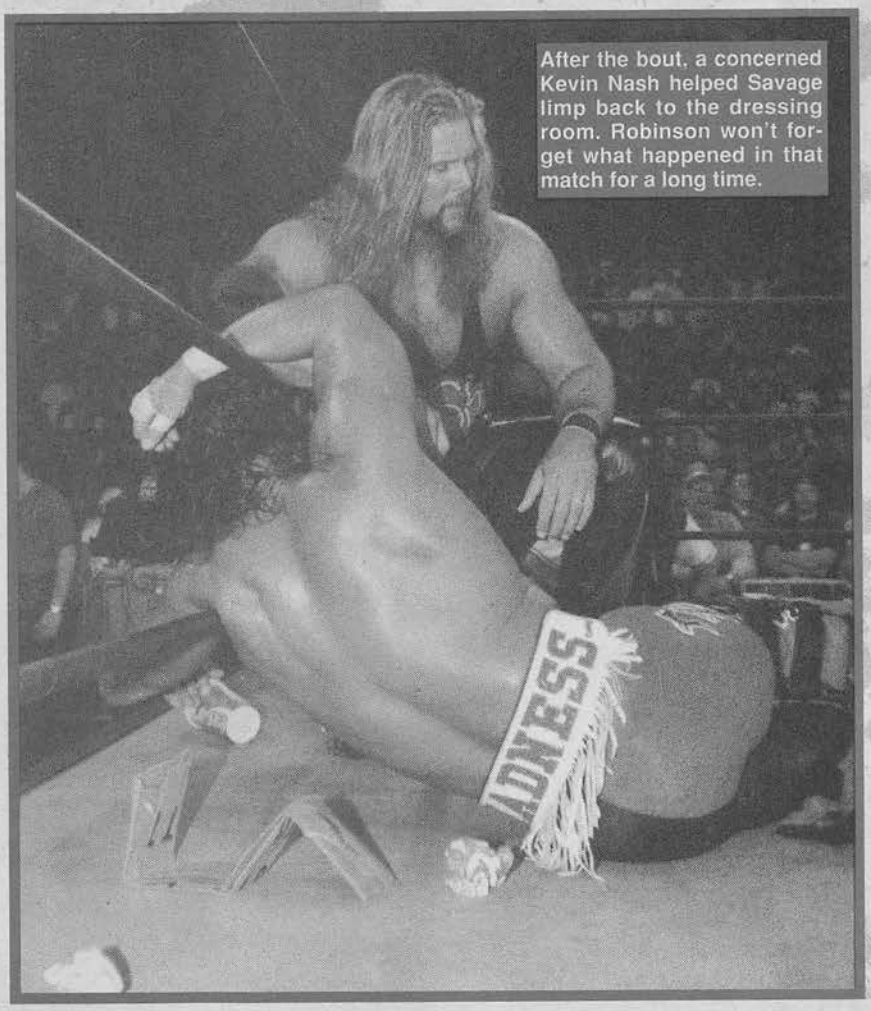
tears in their anterior cruciate ligaments feel. It doesn't take an inside source to know the pain Savage is experiencing.

Charles Robinson knows. Robinson, a young referee who has been working WCW matches for less than a year, had the privilege of officiating the Savage vs. Hogan match at Kemper Arena that aired on the May 11 edition of *Nitro.* It was the most disturbing experience of his young career.

"I was trying to keep order and make sure the wrestlers followed the rules, which was nearly impossible, but I kept looking at Savage's face," Robinson recalled. "I've never seen anything like it. A few times, Hogan hit or kicked Savage in the knee, and I don't know how he kept from screaming out in pain, because that's what I would've been doing. I've seen a lot in my year in WCW, but I've never seen pain like I saw in Savage's face!"

No surprise there, say WCW doctors, who gave Savage the go-ahead to wrestle only when they discovered that the ACL, which they thought was fully torn, was only partially torn. Nonetheless, they say, Savage shouldn't be wrestling, and was granted clearance "only because he was WCW World champion at the time and it's not right to sideline a man who's at the top of his career. He wanted to wrestle, so we allowed him to be the judge. The risk, however, is that a partial tear can develop into a full tear, at which point he would have no choice but to stop wrestling. You can't wrestle with a full tear of the ACL."

Especially against Hogan, who not surprisingly showed Savage no mercy and attacked the knee from the opening bell. Hogan didn't know it, but he didn't have to lay a hand or foot on Savage's knee; merely the strain of bouncing around the ring and executing maneuvers was enough to inflame Savage's torn ligament and limit his mobility. Savage looked fine for the first minute or two, but as the match wore on, his pain intensified.



After the bout, a concerned Kevin Nash helped Savage limp back to the dressing room. Robinson won't forget what happened in that match for a long time.

"The way things traditionally work in wrestling, you don't stop a match unless the wrestler wants it to be stopped, or unless he doesn't respond to the typical checks for submission," Robinson said. "In my opinion, the match should have been stopped, because nobody should be forced to endure that kind of pain and, from my understanding, Savage was risking further injury. Did I want to stop it? Absolutely. But they were fighting for the World title. I've seen wrestlers overcome a lot. You know, though, come to think of it, I've never seen any wrestler overcome what Savage tried to overcome. And although he won the match by DQ, thanks to Hart's interference, he really didn't have much of a chance."

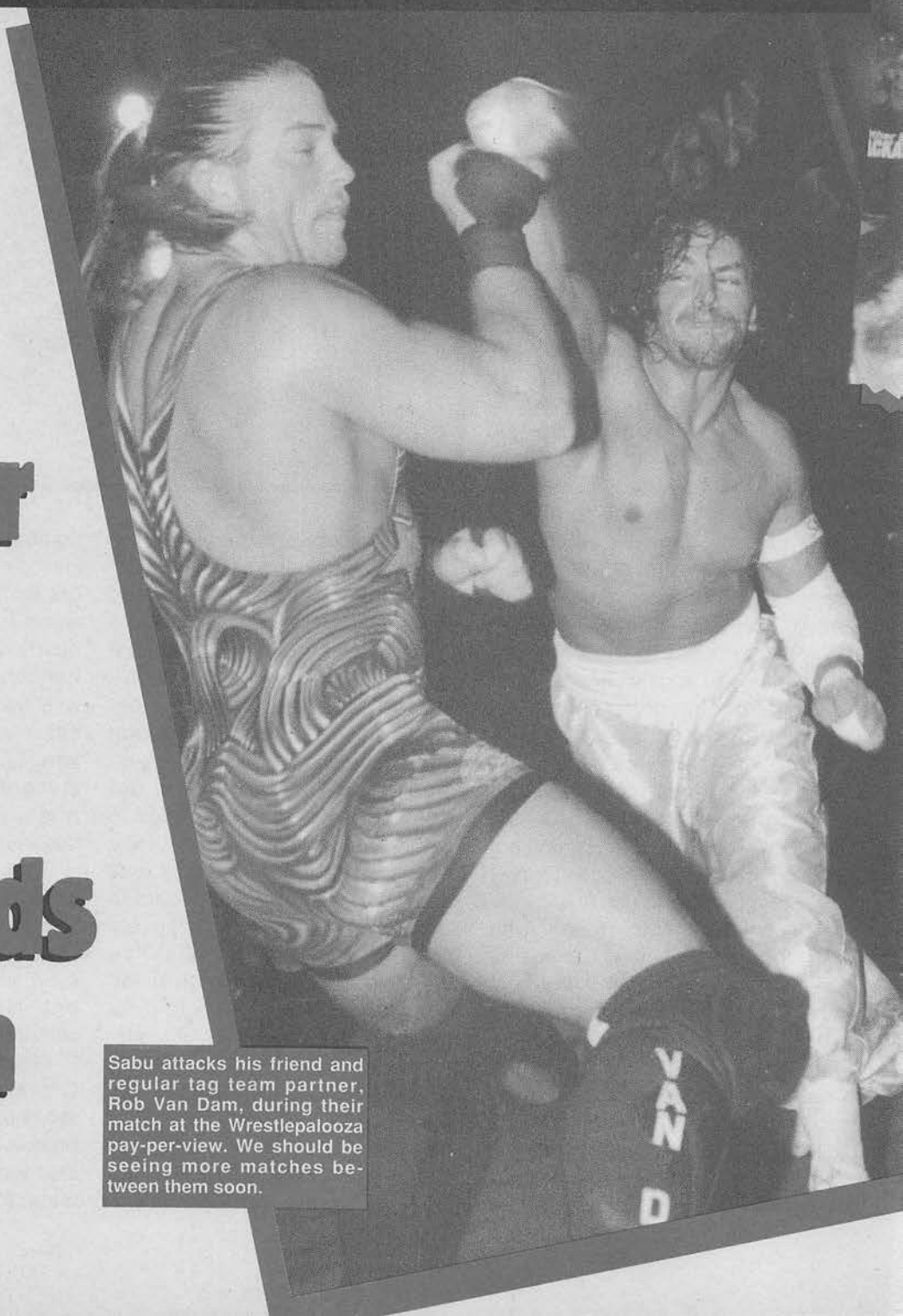
That's what Savage is up against in today's unstable NWO. Hart and Hogan are both out to get him. Everyone in NWO Hollywood is, in fact. If the pain of a nearly debilitating knee injury isn't enough, Savage must also deal with two-, three-, and four-on-one assaults. There is danger at every turn. Elizabeth, knowing Savage's stubbornness, cannot help him. And a young referee was virtually helpless.

That night, Savage limped out of Kemper Arena with his knee heavily bandaged. He limped back to his hotel room. He didn't stop for a postmatch drink or a bite to eat. He tried to sleep, but he couldn't.

Meanwhile, two floors down, Charles Robinson tried to sleep, too. But he couldn't get Savage's pained expression out of his mind. He tried counting sheep. But in his mind, they were all limping. □

IT'S OVER FOR SABU & VAN DAM

Why They Can Never Be *True* Friends Again



Sabu attacks his friend and regular tag team partner, Rob Van Dam, during their match at the Wrestlepalooza pay-per-view. We should be seeing more matches between them soon.

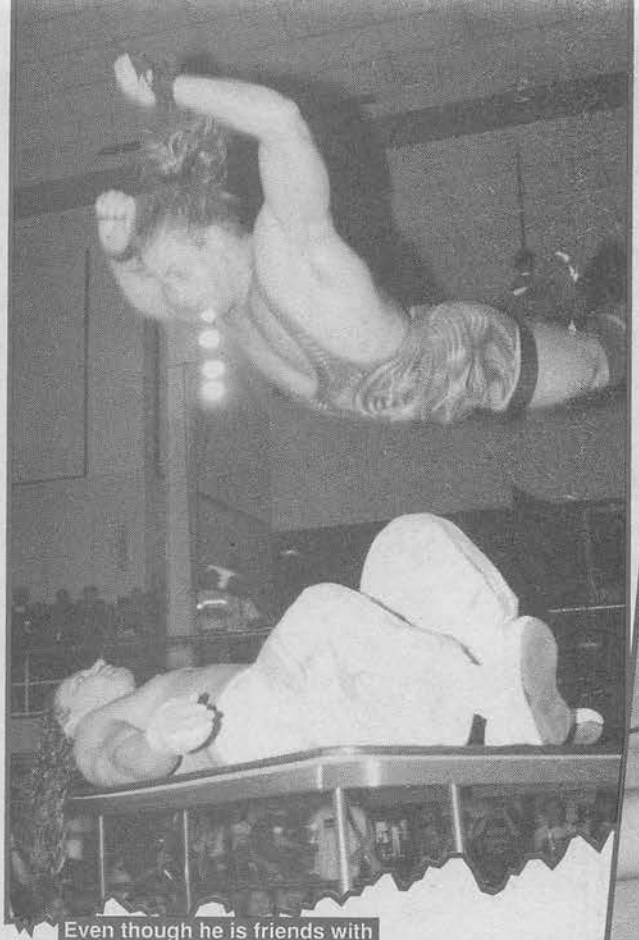
Van Dam and Sabu have a lot of respect for each other, but that quickly degenerated into animosity a few months ago. They may be together again, but a lot of that animosity has not gone away.

Within the span of a few months, Sabu and Rob Van Dam went from being the closest of friends to enemies to friends again. It won't be long before they're enemies again!

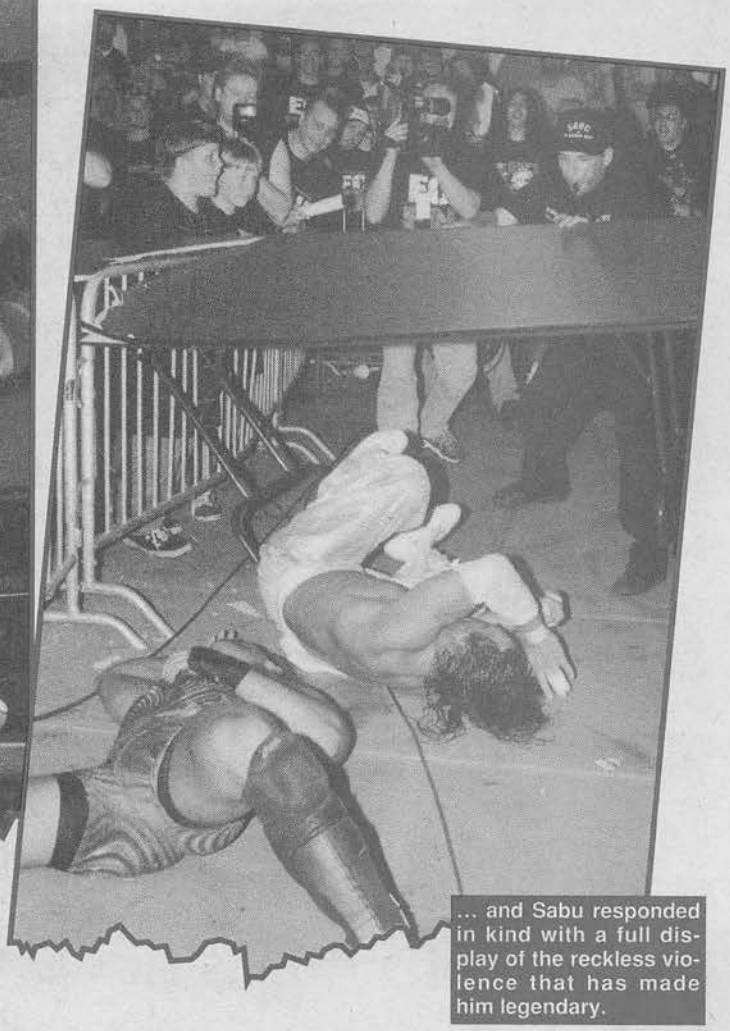
By Dan Murphy

AFTER ROB VAN DAM upset Bam Bam Bigelow for the ECW TV title in Buffalo, New York, on April 4, "Mr. Monday Night" held court for a handful of reporters and loudly proclaimed a new era in wrestling had begun. The ponytailed high-flyer with the devastating kicks and the breathtaking split-legged moonsaults had captured his first title in ECW.

"The first of many," Van Dam crowed, holding the belt high above his head as photographers' flashbulbs sparked. At Van Dam's side, manager Bill Alfonso cocked his elbows and jerked his thumbs



Even though he is friends with Sabu, Van Dam wasn't about to take it easy on his Wrestlepalooza opponent ...



... and Sabu responded in kind with a full display of the reckless violence that has made him legendary.

toward his head in Van Dam's signature sign of superiority, blowing his whistle the whole time.

Sabu skipped the impromptu press conference and caught another ride back to the hotel.

Though Van Dam wrestled a gritty and determined match against Bigelow, "The Beast From The East" used his superior strength to pummel Van Dam. Bigelow appeared ready to complete another successful defense of his belt—until Sabu hit the ring and repeatedly gouged at Bigelow's eye with a foreign object. With Bigelow incapacitated, Van Dam was able to mount the top rope and launch a final splash on Bigelow. Three mat slaps later, Camp Alfonso claimed the gold.

Yet lost in all of Van Dam and Alfonso's hype and celebration was the fact that Van Dam's win effectively destroyed one of wrestling's most dangerous and talented tandems.

Sabu had been scheduled to challenge Bigelow for the TV title at the Wrestlepalooza pay-per-view. Alfonso had Van Dam wrestle Bigelow prior to the PPV in an attempt to "soften up" the big man for Sabu's match. What Alfonso failed to realize was that the contract Sabu signed called for him to wrestle the TV champion at Wrestlepalooza, whomever that may be. As luck would have it, that was Van Dam.

Alfonso was livid when he realized his blunder.

"Bill came into my office yelling and screaming even more than usual," ECW head Paul E. Dangerously said. "He was ranting and raving about being tricked. He even threatened to try to sue ECW to get out of the match at Wrestlepalooza. What could I say? Alfonso made his own bed, and he was trying to get out of lying in it. That's not how we do things in ECW."

Alfonso was justified in his concerns about allowing Van Dam and Sabu to square off. The two feuded extensively in 1993 and again in 1996. When they formed an alliance under Alfonso, they became a formidable team. On several occasions, Van Dam even donned a turban and passed himself off as Sabu, interfering in Sabu's matches, including his win over The Sandman at the Living Dangerously pay-per-view.

But in recent months, Van Dam's ego was beginning to weigh on Sabu.

"I think Van Dam was getting on Sabu's nerves a long time before he won the belt," observed Axl Rotten. "Sabu doesn't say much. He likes to get his work done in the ring. It was really only a matter of time before Sabu had enough of Van Dam's showboat-

ing and hogging all the interview time. I think just about everybody was expecting Sabu to let it all hang out against Van Dam at Wrestlepalooza."

Sabu did just that, and Van Dam responded in kind. Any feelings of friendship between the two men disappeared very quickly into the contest. For 30 minutes, Sabu and Van Dam battered each other with everything in their respective arsenals. And all Alfonso could do was watch the nightmare match that he had inadvertently signed.

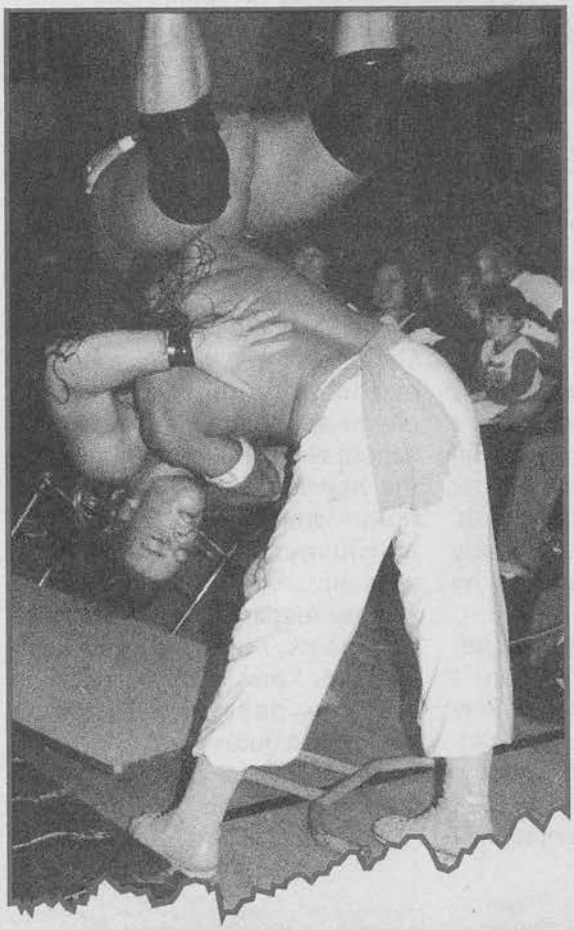
When the bell rang to signal a time-limit draw, Alfonso hit the ring to try to salvage what he could of his stable. Alfonso snatched the TV belt and presented it to Van Dam, exhorting the two to shake hands and put their differences behind them. After pleading, Sabu agreed to offer his hand to Van Dam, but the champion instead bailed from the ring with the belt.

Bill Alfonso is confident that his men have put their problems behind them, but the relationship between Sabu and Van Dam is hardly a stable one.

After the match, Alfonso insisted that things were all right between his charges.

"Everything's fine, just like I said it would be all along," he proclaimed. "Everybody is so afraid of facing Sabu and 'Mr. Monday Night' that they tried to break up the team by forcing them to wrestle. But Van Dam and Sabu are blood brothers. They wrestled each other once, and now they know it's time to get back to business. And it doesn't matter who has what belt, because they're both equally great, the two greatest wrestlers in the world. That's all there is to it!"

Okay, so Alfonso makes a decent point. Less than two weeks after Wrestlepalooza, Van Dam teamed with Lance Storm against Sabu and Chris Candido at the ECW Arena. The violent, spirited match ended in a no-contest as Van Dam high-fived Sabu and the two of them held the TV belt up together.



The good news for ECW fans is that a full-scale Sabu-Van Dam feud could easily produce a few candidates for Match of the Year.

So they're back together. How long will this last? Until one of them makes a critical mistake and the other blames him for a key loss, perhaps? Until Van Dam interferes in one of Sabu's matches when Sabu doesn't think interference is necessary, maybe?

Don't think Sabu has forgotten that it was his interference that put the TV title around Van Dam's waist in the first place ... or that for at least a few weeks, the TV title was much more important to Van Dam than a friendship. For a long time, Sabu and Van Dam trusted each other 100 percent. That kind of trust will never exist between them again.

Right now, Alfonso ought to enjoy watching his two charges work together in harmony, because sooner or later—probably within a few months—he'll be trying to prevent a full-scale explosion between Sabu and Van Dam.

And if their match at Wrestlepalooza was any indication—the sport could be on the verge of one of the most exciting feuds in ECW history! □

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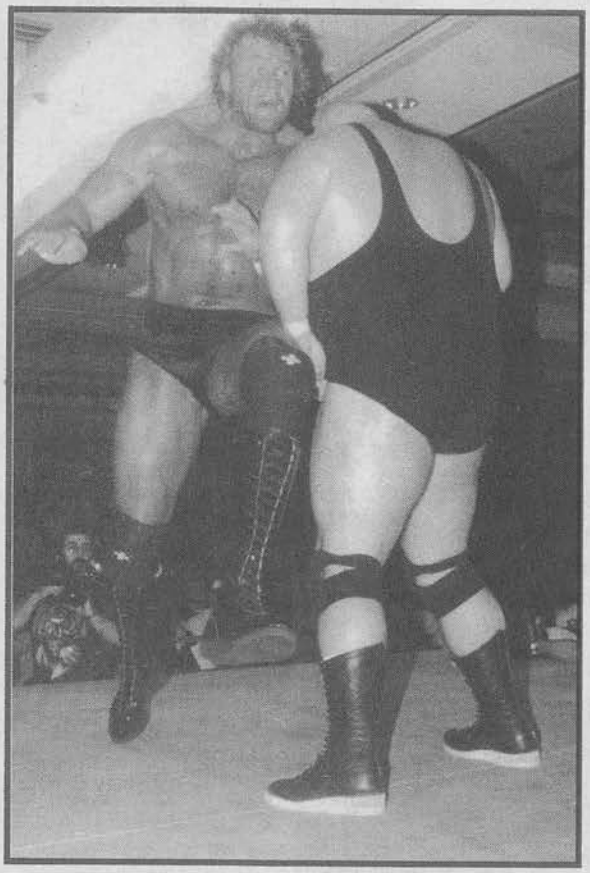
YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)



"Psycho" Sid Vicious puts a shoulder into King Kong Bundy, whom he often faces on the indy circuit. Reader Manuel Orlandi thinks Sid has what it takes to unseat Steve Austin as WWF champion.

their country) the "Hitman" took the money and ran to WCW.

How did he reward his fans? By not setting foot in the ring for three months. Then he tries to pass it off on the WCW front office for not signing him to any matches. Yeah, right. And now that he's finally decided to wrestle, what does he do? He joins the NWO.

Well, all you Bret Hart sympathizers, you can keep your hero. I think he is dirt, and I hope Randy Savage, whom I also think is dirt, ends his lousy, two-faced career.

MARK ERTEL
Bloomington, MN

HAT TRICK?

What's the matter with "Psycho" Sid Vicious? He is one of the few men around who could beat "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin for the WWF World title.

I remember when he returned to the WWF in 1996. He destroyed each and every opponent he faced—including Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels, and Vader.

I think if he returned to the WWF with the same intensity he had in 1996, he could probably win the title for a third time and would be recognized as one of the greatest wrestlers in the history of the sport.

MANUEL ORLANDI
Codogno, Italy

GANZ FANZ

While reading THE WRESTLER each month, I usually skip over the "Introducing" section, except for July 1998 ("Introducing ... Skull Ganz").

The story about Skull Ganz piledriving his opponent in a high school wrestling match had to be the highlight of the magazine. I found what he did to be brave and funny. This man is a *real* wrestler.

After reading about his accomplishments, I must say I was impressed. I just hope he gets the break he deserves. This man could be a future world champion, and I will be cheering him all the way to the top.

MARK CARMELITANO
Hyde Park, NY ☐

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Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)

Sting and Hollywood Hogan have had many nose-to-nose meetings in the ring during the last year. Hogan *thought* a meeting they allegedly had away from the ring resulted in Sting agreeing to join NWO Hollywood.

people look up to, and he's done this to me?

"Sting really pulled a fast one on me, brother, and I'll make sure he never gets a job in Hollywood again!"

Ontario's Border City Wrestling competitors **Scott D'Amore** and **Larry Destiny** boasted they could beat any members of the WWF's **Nation of Domination**. You can imagine how surprised they were when Intercontinental champion **Rocky Maivia** and **D-Lo Brown** accepted their challenge and showed up for a match in Border City. Guess who won. "They got lucky and beat my partner," D'Amore told me. "I have big plans to go to the WWF and straighten that whole Nation out!"

Yokozuna is feuding with **The Honky Tonk Man** in Southern California Championship Wrestling ... All-Pro Wrestling has new Universal tag team champions in **Frank** and **Vic Murdoch**. The brothers won the belts from **Tony Jones** and **Moondog Moretti** ... **Crusher Carlsen** has beaten **E.Z. Ryder** for the Canadian Wrestling Federation title.

Marc Mero wasted no time finding a new manager after seeing to it that **Sable** was banished from the WWF. **Miss Jacquelyn** has already helped him win several important matches.

"I wish I could have seen the face of **Sable** when she saw who was replacing her," Mero laughed. If you remember, a few years ago, Jackie had a hand in breaking up the relationship between **Kevin Sullivan** and **Woman**. Did she have anything to do with the Mero-Sable split?

"My relationship with Marc is something that's very important to me, but it's also personal," she said. "When I decide to let the public know all the details, I'll be sure to contact you first, honey!"

That's what's happening. I'll see you at the matches! □

Jacquelyn certainly caused a lot of problems for Woman when the two were in WCW together. She even played a role in the split between Woman and Kevin Sullivan. Did she also split up Marc Mero and Sable?

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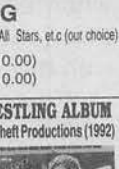

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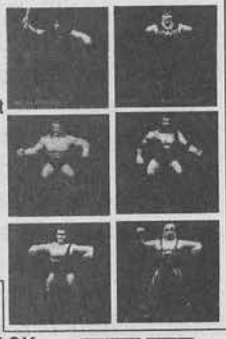

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NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

paign succeeded, as Hank finished in the top spot. Number two? It was *not* Leonardo DiCaprio, as most had predicted. It was another ladies' man: none other than Ric Flair.

That's right. Hell hath no fury like wrestling fans scorned. They invaded *People's* website and inundated it with votes for the "Nature Boy." As the days passed, Flair's ranking increased at an alarming rate. When all the ballots were tallied, Flair secured the "silver" and, as promised, was featured prominently and given mainstream publicity that would make Hollywood Hogan salivate. I would venture a guess that more people saw that site than saw Hogan's latest *Three Ninjas* movie. Then again, how hard can that be?

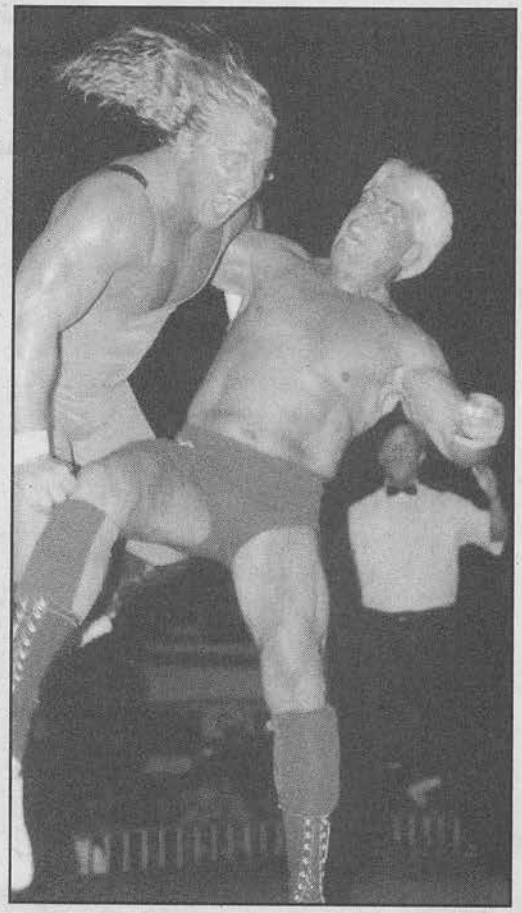
"Free Ric Flair" is not just a chant heard in arenas around the world—it is now a cause. Wrestling fans long to hear Flair's voice and too see him in the ring, which is where he is at his best. If not in WCW, they want Flair released from his contract so he can display his wares elsewhere. One website is even featuring "Free Ric Flair" T-shirts that are being snapped up almost as fast as Bill Goldberg T-shirts.

The next time you attend any wrestling event and a wrestler backs his opponent and starts delivering chops to his chest, listen for the fans around to start yelling *"Whoooooo!"* What other wrestler would be afforded such passion? Flair has a special and unusual relationship with the fans. No matter how many rules he breaks and no matter how often he sneak-attacks so-called good guys, fans continue to cheer him. Ric Flair could never really turn good or bad. He's just Ric Flair.

That is why it is disconcerting not to see Ric Flair on TV and only hear and read about him in various publications. Fans feel cheated, and they have a right to feel that way. Ric Flair is a reminder of what wrestling once was. He represents hope to the wrestling purists who believe that the size of your muscles should not determine your stature in professional wrestling. The word "legend" is thrown around so casually that we sometimes take for granted who the true legends are. Then, when they are gone, we long for their return. Such is the case with this bizarre Ric Flair saga.

Wrestling fans clearly want their hero back, no matter what organization provides him the spotlight. However, it is out of their hands and in the hands of a clunky and snail-like legal process.

The clock is ticking, and this 60-minute man and his fans are going to be waiting for more than just that hour. It will only feel like "all night long." □



If and when he does return to WCW, might Flair befriend Curt Hennig and join him in NWO Wolfpac? Most fans probably don't care at this point. They just want him back on TV and back in the arenas.

TOP 10 WAYS RIC FLAIR IS SPENDING HIS TIME OFF

10. Invading Internet chat rooms under his secret screen name, "Eric B."
9. Strutting through the back yard when he takes out the garbage.
8. Telling his kids, "To have a clean room, you have to clean your room."
7. Shouting *"Whoooooo!"* at the grocery store every time a double coupon is rung up.
6. Watching old Horsemen tapes of Paul Roma and wondering, *What was I thinking?*
5. Takin' care of business at Space Mountain, if you know what I mean.
4. Calling WCW offices to see if they have Prince Albert in a can.
3. Hoping and praying for the day when Susan Lucci gets her Emmy.
2. Figure-fouring the neigborhood gossip.
1. Driving by Eric Bischoff's house with ... let's just say less than four fingers stickng up.

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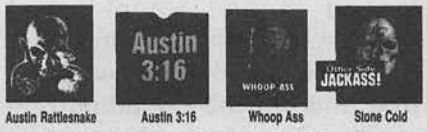

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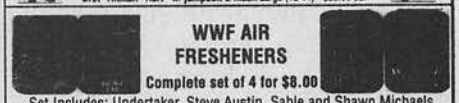

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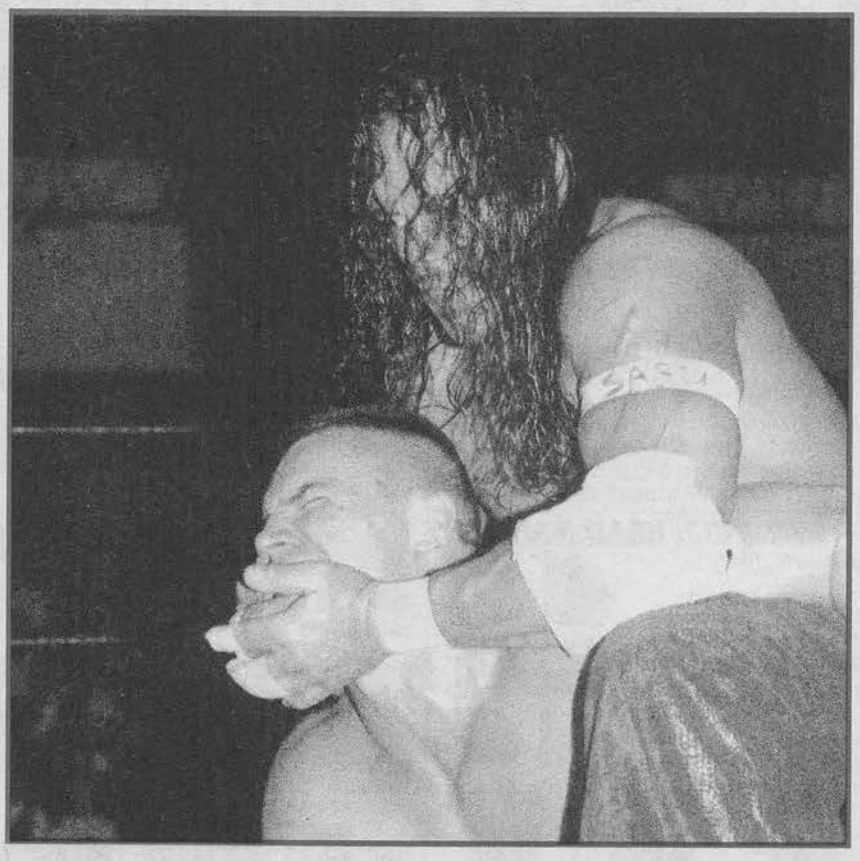
CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 14)

match started, the fans couldn't wait for Faarooq and Blackman to pummel the WWF Intercontinental champion. Although this match was billed as a streetfight, all four men were relatively conservative with their battle plans and mostly stuck to traditional tag team rules. Faarooq, however, did take advantage of streetfight rules at one point. As he controlled Rocky, he removed his black leather belt and repeatedly whipped "The Rock" with it. The crowd cheered Faarooq on as Rocky tried desperately to scramble away from him.

Later, while Blackman was in the ring, the other members of The Nation, who were stationed at ringside, started antagonizing him by grabbing at him and distracting him. Finally, Blackman could no longer take the harassment, and he lashed back at them. That was just what Owen was hoping he'd do. Just as Blackman turned back around, Hart nailed him with a spinning kick and pinned him.

In other bouts: Skull & Eight-Ball beat Savio Vega & Jesus Castillo ... Terry Funk beat Marc Mero ... Bradshaw beat Barry Windham ... The Undertaker beat Kane by disqualification ... Jeff Jarrett defeated Chainz ... Vader beat Quebecer Pierre ... WWF World tag team champs The New Age Outlaws defeated LOD 2000 ... WWF World champion Steve Austin beat Hunter Hearst Helmsley.



Sabu applies a camel clutch on Lance Storm during a tag team match at the ECW Arena. Sabu gave Storm quite a beating ... with help from Rob Van Dam, who was supposed to Lance's partner.

Philadelphia, PA *(Correspondent—Mike Dooley):* What happens when you team Lance Storm with Rob Van Dam and put them in the ring against their respective usual tag team partners, Chris Candido and Sabu? When ECW promoters did so at the ECW Arena, they got a wild brawl that ended in a no-contest.

Storm and Candido, who hold the ECW tag team title together, faced off first and rocked each other with chops. Soon Van Dam tagged in and wheel-kicked Candido. Not long after that happened, all four men jumped in the ring and started pounding one another. They traded kicks, chair shots, and plenty of punches. In one amazing move, Sabu dove onto all three of the other participants. Later, he hit Van Dam with two vicious chair shots.

By that time, it was pretty much every man for himself. Candido got angry when Sabu flashed the Triple Threat hand signal, so he went after him. Meanwhile, Van Dam used his "Van Daminator" on Storm. Sabu followed that up by using a camel clutch on Storm. Van Dam did him one better by kicking a chair into a weary Storm.

Finally, Sabu and Van Dam double-splashed Candido. Before leaving the ring, Sabu and Van Dam each held one of the tag team belts, then high-fived each other and held up Van Dam's ECW TV belt together.

In other bouts: Jerry Lynn beat Justin Credible ... Chris Chetti defeated Jamie Dundee ... Mikey Whipwreck pinned Mike Lozansky ... John Kronus pinned Danny Doring ... Axl Rotten & Mahoney beat Tracey Smothers & Little Guido ... Bam Bam Bigelow pinned Al Snow ... Buh Buh Ray, "Big" Dick, & D-Von Dudley defeated The Sandman, Spike Dudley, & Tommy Dreamer. □

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YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 16)

against Ken Shamrock, break his ankle, and then join the Nation?"—Jamie Searcy, Winston, NC

A: **"I got tired of waiting for McMahon and the pompous buffoons at Titan to take notice of me," Hart admitted. "The suits have been sticking it to me for too long! First, they let DeGeneration X attack me, then threaten to suspend me after I strike back. Then they tell me I have to defend the European belt in an impromptu match—with my foot in a cast. Meanwhile, I get double-teamed by Helmsley and Chyna, who nearly broke a bat over my neck. When I finally get a rematch, Chyna interferes. And Hunter gets rewarded with title shot after title shot, while I'm forced to start from ground zero. I've tried to play by the rules, but it doesn't pay. As for Ken Shamrock, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. But even he can't do anything to me now, because I'm part of the baddest gang in the WWF—The Nation—and I won't stop wreaking havoc until I get a shot at Austin's title!"**

• • •

Q: "My question is for Dean Malenko: 'Iceman,' how do you plan on getting revenge on Chris Jericho for all the nasty things he said about you and your family? You've already taken his title. What's left to do?"—Amanda Hill, Iowa City, IA

A: **"The only thing left to do is to keep beating him—again and again and again," Malenko explained. "Not to toot my own horn, Amanda, but I was able to overcome my losses to Jericho. I didn't hang my head, nor did I quit. I took some time to figure out the situation. And I rebounded. Now I'm a champion again. Jericho falls apart when things go awry. You see how he reacts when he loses. He despises it. It drives him crazy. That is the fundamental difference between Chris Jericho and Dean Malenko. He cannot handle adversity. So, if I keep on beating him, I'll eventually drive him out of WCW."**

Joel Gertner has little time for critics. He's too busy hurling insults at the ECW fans in Philadelphia—or anyone else within earshot. But not everyone thinks he's funny.

• • •

Q: "I have a question for Joel Gertner, manager of the Dudleys: Joel, how long does it take you to compose those corny ring introductions of yours? They are the low point of any ECW show, but I know you aren't witty enough to make them up on the spot."—Frank Freil, Philadelphia, PA

A: **"I have a question for you," the verbose Gertner retorted. "How dare you question the dispatch of my banter? Aside from being the voice of the most dominant tag team in the world—the Dudleys—I, Joel 'The Quintessential Studmuffin' Gertner, am quick on my feet. I can deliver a litany of insults before you can say, 'Yo.' If you can even say, 'Yo,' that is. I am also a damn handsome man. Just because the mental midgets of Philadelphia like yourself need a minimum of two weeks to digest just a single syllable of mine, there is no cause for insult. So please, the next time you feel the urge to blurt out an inane question, try to resist, because your feeble attempt at sarcasm only demonstrates your ignorance."** □

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June 1983: Flair-Windham Match Spurs Controversy: Should The NWA Champion Be Allowed To Choose His Challengers? Also: Ivan Koloff, Bruiser Brody, Kerry Von Erich, Andre-Kamala, Brazil-Valentine.

July 1983: Ric Flair: "I Wrestle The Men Backlund Is Afraid Of." Also: Putski-Adonis, Kevin Sullivan, Bob Roop, Martel-Heenan.

Sept. 1983: Nick Bockwinkel Forces Hulk Hogan Into Exile: And Only The Fans Can Bring Him Back. Also: Briscos, Blackwell-Kerry-Race, Mulligan & Windham.

Nov. 1983: Target—Harley Race! Can Dusty Rhodes Fulfill His American Dream A Third Time? Also: Rick Rude, Gagne & Brunzell, Tito Santana, Von Erichs-Freebirds.

Dec. 1983: The Night The AWA World Title Was Stolen From Mil Mascaras. Also: Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Dino Bravo, Fabulous Ones, Garin & Sunshine.

March 1984: Is Tito Santana Trying To Blackmail The WWF? Also: Wayne & Sawyer, Hogan-Race, David Von Erich, Jesse Ventura.

June 1984: David Von Erich—We'll Never Forget You. Also: Billy Jack, Flair-Race, Bockwinkel-Bravo, Brickhouse Brown.

Aug. 1984: Garvin vs. Roberts: "Hands Of Stone" Crushes "The Snake." Also: Freebirds-Devastation Inc., Sawyer-Sullivan, Lawler & Dillon, McDaniel-Race.

Sept. 1984: Kerry Von Erich Wins The NWA Title: For David ... For Texas ... For Wrestling! Also: Billy Jack, Bundy & Superstar-Road Warriors, Piper & Orndorff-Johnson & Atlas, Rick Martel.

Nov. 1984: The $50,000 Full-Nelson Challenge Match: Billy Jack Gets Revenge Against Superstar Graham. Also: Piper-Hogan, Heenan & Saito, Brody & Hansen, Von Erichs.

Dec. 1984: The Tully Blanchard-Rick Steamboat Feud: Will Dusty Rhodes End It ... Or Make It Worse? Also: Tito Santana, Martel-Atlas, D. Funk, Mike Von Erich.

Jan. 1985: Kerry Von Erich: "I've Got Ric Flair's NWA Title Within My Grasp." Also: Albano & Lauper, Koloffs & Kernodle, Road Warriors, Lawler & Rude, Scott McGhee.

April 1985: Six-Man Riot! Road Warriors & Ellering vs. Rhodes, Rich, & Anderson. Also: Tonga Kid, tomorrow's stars, Adams-Kevin, Flair-Jack, Terminators.

June 1985: Are The WWF Rulebreakers Singling Out Barry Windham For Destruction? Also: Zbyszko-Backlund, Rhodes-Blanchard, Tommy Rich, Oliver-Haynes.

July 1985: It's A Dog's Life ... And Junkyard Dog Wouldn't Trade It With Anyone! Also: Backlund-Martel, Kernodle-Koloff, Butch Reed, Hernandez & Sunshine, Mike Graham.

Aug. 1985: Ten Days Of Blood And Glory: The Road Warriors Invade Japan! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Bugsy McGraw, Sheik & Volkoff-Windham & Rotundo.

Oct. 1985: David Shultz Gets An NWA Title Shot: Ric Flair—"I Wrestle The Men Hulk Hogan Is Afraid Of!" Also: Misty Blue, Rick Martel, Kendall Windham, George Steele, Killer Brooks, wrestling greats' all-time top 10.

June 1986: Kerry Reveals His Secret: "I've Told Magnum T.A. How To Beat Ric Flair!" Also: Steve Williams, Hogan-Orton, Flair-Bockwinkel, Lex Luger.

Nov. 1986: Morton & Gibson Take A Trip To Badstreet U.S.A.: The Rock 'n' Roll Express vs. The Freebirds. Also: Eddie Gilbert, Hogan-Orndorff, Mike Von Erich, Mulligan-Bass.

Dec. 1986: Ric Flair's NWA Title Reign: Last Chance To Silence The Critics! Also: Nikita Koloff, Gilbert & Sting, Hogan-Piper, Abdullah-Adams, Nick Bockwinke.

Feb. 1987: Tragedy Strikes Wrestling: Magnum T.A. Needs Your Prayers Now More Than Ever. Also: Roberts-Steamboat, Crusher Yurkof, Terry Gordy, Wendell Cooley.

March 1987: Ivan & Khrushchev's Kremlin Orders: Crush Nikita Koloff's Russian Revolution! Also: Barry Windham, OMG, Brian Adias, Savage-Steamboat, Jimmy Snuka.

April 1987: Hulk's Giant Tasks: Hercules, Kamala ... And Andre? Also: Luger-Allen, Rich-Lawler, Rude & Fernandez-Rock 'n' Rolls.

June 1987: The Hart Foundation vs. The Can-Ams: Special Analysis Of This WWF Superfeud! Also: Nick Bockwinkel, Paul Orndorff, Rhodes & Murdoch, Steve Williams.

July 1987: Missy Hyatt: Will She Kiss And Tell In The WWF? Also: Chris Adams, Hart Foundation, Luger & Horsemen, Nikita-Cornette, Stan Hansen.

Sept. 1987: Independence Day! Also: Hennig-Bockwinkel, Hart Foundation, Bubba, Missy.

Oct. 1987: The Honky Tonk Man Wins The Intercontinental Title: Is Randy Savage The Fans' Last Hope. Also: Kerry Von Erich, Ken Patera, Sting-Gilbert, Horsemen-Freebirds, Zbyszko-Gagne.

Dec. 1987: Hulk Hogan: Will He Be Drowned By The New Wave Of Challengers? Also: Hennig-Lawler, Windham-Steiner, Flair-Williams, Brutus Beefcake, Ronnie Garvin.

Jan. 1988: The Experts Agree: The Road Warriors Will Turn Bad In 1988! Also: Koloff-Taylor, Curt Hennig, Duggan-DiBiase.

Feb. 1988: Ric Flair Admits: "I'm Nothing Without The NWA Belt!" Also: Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Hogan-Andre, Hennig-Lawler, Terry Taylor.

March 1988: After Four Years As Champion ... Only Hulk Hogan Can Beat Hulk Hogan. Also: Warriors-Demolition, Steve Williams, Luger & Dillon, Calgary, Terry Gordy.

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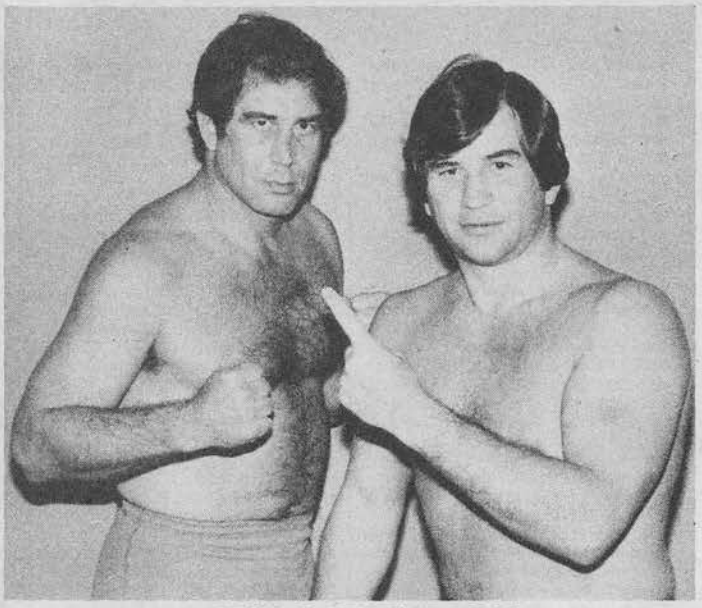
The Briscos Turn Bad: NOW THERE IS NO HOPE FOR WRESTLING



JACK & JERRY BRISCO

When the history of professional wrestling is written, the Brisco brothers will be described as heroes. At least, that's what everyone thought until recently. Now the brothers, victims of frustration and ambition, threaten to rewrite the history books . . . and become a part of one of its bloodiest chapters

Photos by Floyd See

THE TENSION IN the room made those present want to be anywhere else. Rage and sorrow were almost physical presences. Reporters were shocked at how angry they all were at this recent turn of events.

"I didn't realize until this happened," one said, "how much I depended on the Briscos to be scientific, respected wrestlers. It got to the point where you didn't even think about it, like you don't think about breathing until it becomes difficult. Now that they're rule-breakers, I feel something good has gone horribly wrong."

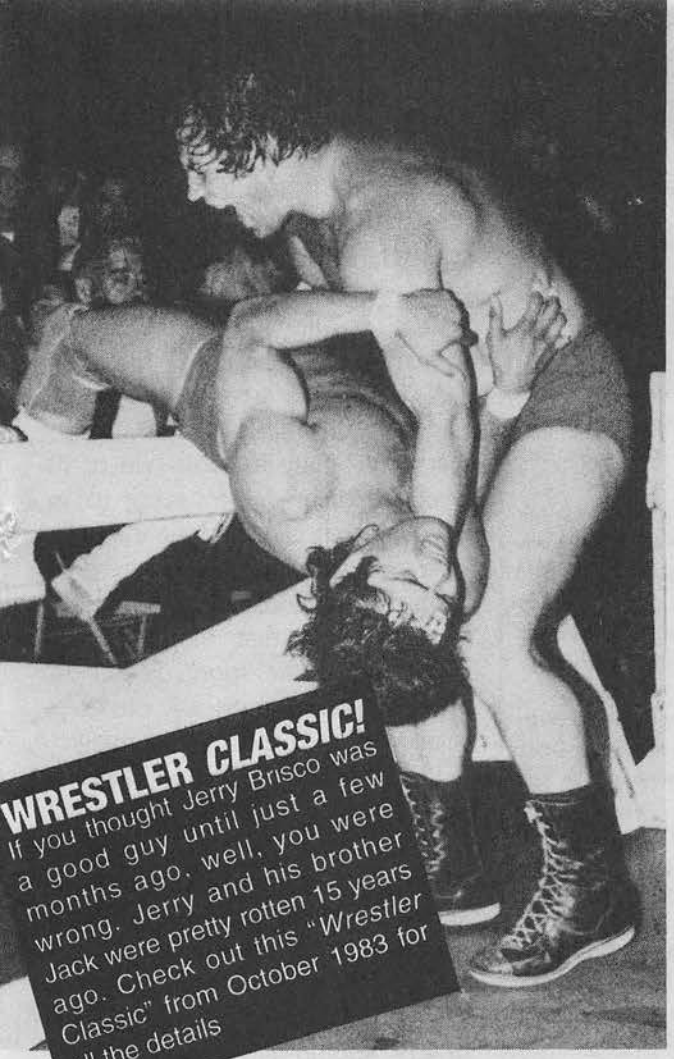
"I feel betrayed," another admitted, "as if they owed me something. You're supposed to remain neutral in this business, but we all know that's impossible. I admired the Briscos for what they did and how they did it. We don't really live in a time of heroes, but they were as close as we come."

"It's strange," a third said, "but you can't really blame them. This is a profession, and they have the right to earn a living. Younglood and Steamboat weren't giving them a chance at the NWA World tag team title. They weren't being allowed to earn a living. So they got angry. They may have betrayed wrestling, but in a sense wrestling betrayed them."

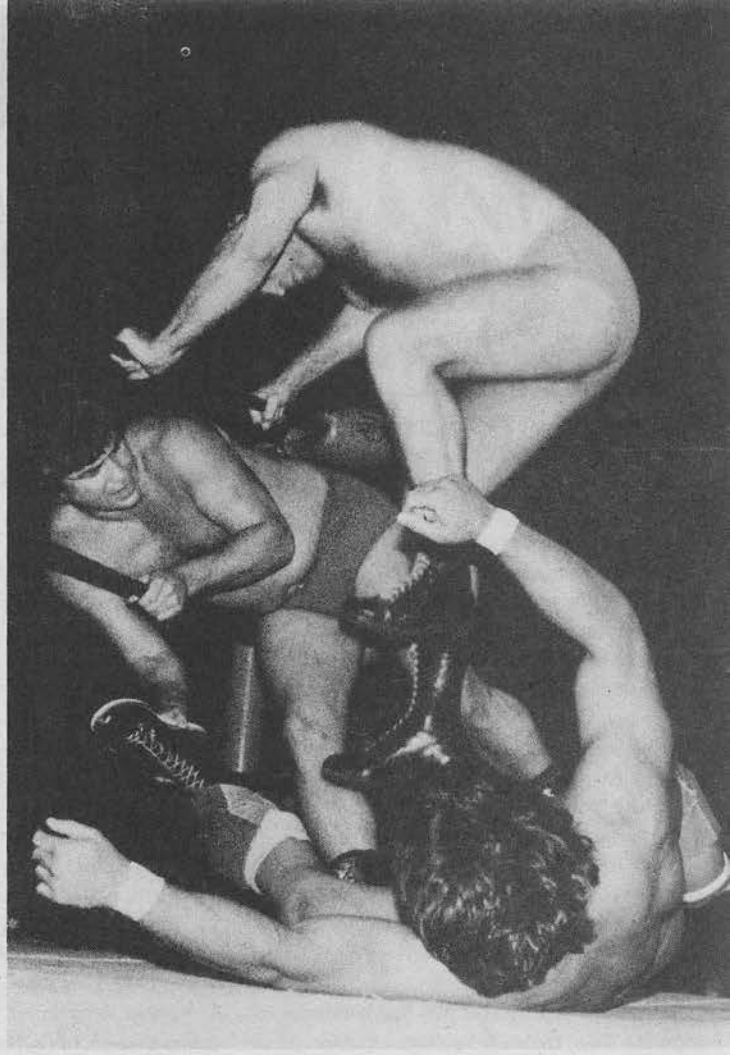
"You can't blame Jay Youngblood and Rick Steamboat," the second reporter interrupted. "These guys were doing what the promoters wanted. The promoters felt the fans wouldn't want to see their favorites battling each other. So nobody dared book the match."

"So wrestling betrayed them," the third reporter continued, "and they couldn't do anything about it. They were trapped in a no-win situation. It turned them. Look, I talked to them three weeks ago. They're different men. Something inside them died. It's like their decency has been eaten away by a cancer of fury. It was the saddest interview I ever had. They want and need a title match. If wrestling wasn't going to give it to them, they were going to take it. If you ask me, they had a right to take it."

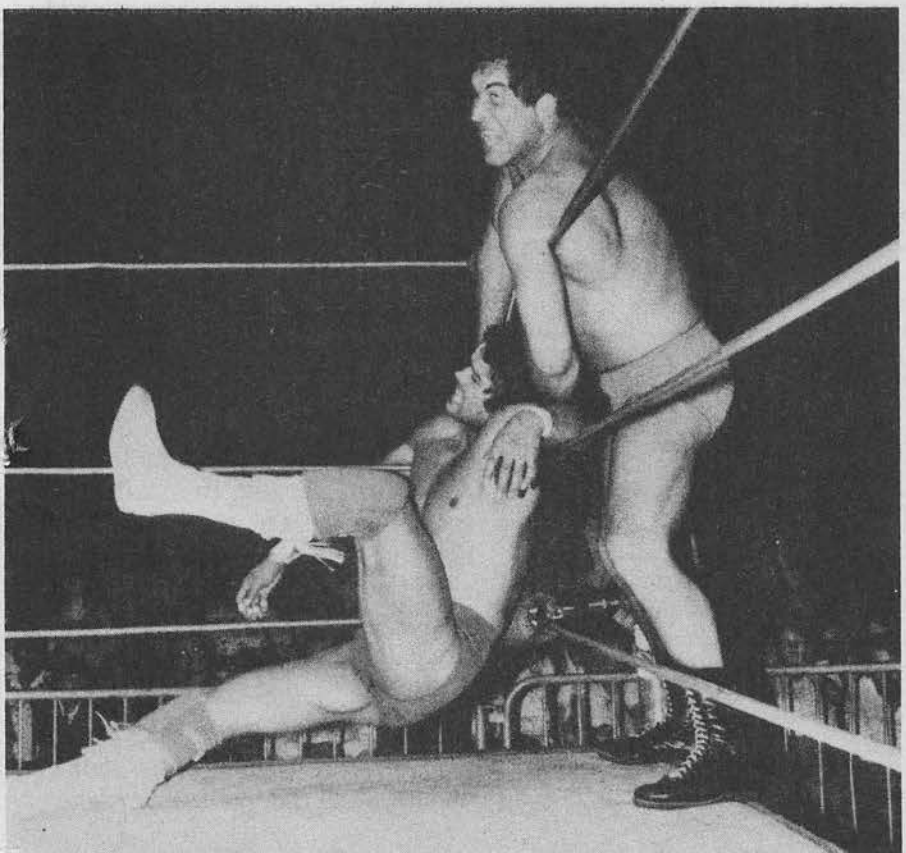
"No!" the first reporter shouted, surprising even himself by this emotional outburst. He calmed down before explaining, "No one has the right to turn against integ-



WRESTLER CLASSIC!
If you thought Jerry Brisco was a good guy until just a few months ago, well, you were wrong. Jerry and his brother Jack were pretty rotten 15 years ago. Check out this "Wrestler Classic" from October 1983 for all the details



Jerry Brisco slams Jay Youngblood's back across a wooden barrier (above left). Jerry and Jack Brisco double-team Rick Steamboat (above right). Jack chokes Youngblood with the tag team rope (below). The Briscos' change in tactics is astonishing!



rity and decency. Ambition is no excuse. They are scientific wrestlers—at least they were scientific wrestlers. When you choose to be that, you take on the responsibilities of that decision. You don't ignore those responsibilities because you want a title shot. A man's sense of what's right should be more important than a championship belt. At one time, the Briscos believed that."

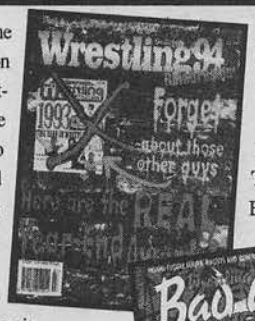
"And you can't excuse their rulebreaking," the second journalist added. "They're breaking guys legs, damnit! And not by accident, either. They deliberately broke Pvt. Nelson's leg. We all know that. There's no excuse for that. One can only condemn them."

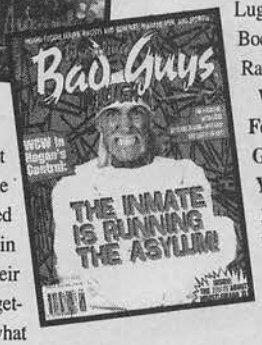
There was a moment of quiet

(Continued on page 62)

Bad Guys, THE MAGAZINE

For a couple of years, the self-righteous editors at London Publishing Co. actually permitted an entire magazine to be published that was devoted to those wrestlers, managers, and valets who couldn't care less about the rules of this sport or the wishes of most fans. Then, suddenly and without explanation, they pulled the plug on it. Maybe they felt threatened—who knows?





From a business standpoint, they must have known that *Bad Guys* is what the people wanted, because it's back—although relegated to the "Magazine Within A Magazine" in *Wrestle America.* (Rulebreakers, along with their fans and journalistic supporters, are used to getting the short end of the stick, so we'll take what we can get!)

Some back issues of *Wrestling Rulebreaker* and *Bad Guys,* The Magazines With A Bad Attitude, are still available. Order now, before the snobbish editors pull the ad!

Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker (Spring 1993): **Bobby Heenan & "Narcissist" Lex Luger: The Total Package Of Brain & Brawn:** Color Pinup: Steve Austin vs. Rick Steamboat. Plus: Cactus Jack, Rick Rude, Jerry Lawler, Rulebreaker's Insider With Joey Styles, Big Van Vader, Hall of Fame—The Sheik.

Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker (Fall 1993): **Yokozuna: He Flattened Hulk Hogan ... Crushed Hulkamania Forever ... Spit In The Face Of America ... And We Love It!** Color Pinup: Paul Orndorff vs. Ron Simmons. Plus: Four Horsemen, 10 favorites we'd like to see turn dirty, baddest man poll, Rick Rude-Dustin Rhodes, Giant Gonzalez, Jerry Lawler, Hall of Fame—Fred Blassie.

Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker (Winter 1993): **Brat Patrol! Wrestling 93 Targets The 8Sport's Most Pampered Players.** Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Steve Austin, Lex Luger, The Kid, Heavenly Bodies, Hall of Fame—Harley Race.

Wrestling 94—Rulebreaker: Forget About Those Other Guys—Here Are The Real Year-End Awards. (Spring 1994): 1993—The Year Of The Rulebreaker. Plus: Sting, Brian Lee, Hall of Fame—Killer Kowalski.

Wrestling Bad Guys (Winter 1994): **King Kong Bundy—Monster With A Mission.** Color Pinup: Bon Backlund. Plus: Tommy Dreamer, UFOs, Hulk Hogan, Abdullah the Butcher, Big Van Vader, Hall of Fame—Ivan Koloff.

Wrestling Bad Guys (Spring 1995): **Vader's Vow Of Violence: "I've Begun My Systematic Destruction Of Hulk Hogan!"** Color Action Gallery: Sabu. Plus: Kevin Sullivan, Bob Backlund, Ric Flair, Jim Cornette & The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Tatanka, fat wrestlers, Hall of Fame—George Steele.

Wrestling Bad Guys (Summer 1995): **WCW In Hogan's Control: The Inmate Is Running The Asylum!** Color Action Gallery: Big Van Vader. Plus: WCW Uncensored, Bret Hart-Jerry Lawler, Bubba Rogers, the next Flair, Hall of Fame—Fritz Von Erich.

☐ Spring 1993
☐ Fall 1993
☐ Winter 1993
☐ Spring 1994
☐ Winter 1994
☐ Spring 1995
☐ Summer 1995

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THE BRISCOS

(Continued from page 61)

and then a soft but commanding voice was heard. The reporters turned to see Matt Brock, veteran reporter, sitting in a corner. As so often happens with Matt, he seemed to be staring intently at something only he could see.

"The Briscos are wrong," Brock said, "and that's what's really scary. Wrestling has lost two of its best and there doesn't seem to be anything that can be done about it. The sport has once again forced its heroes to turn on those who love them. When that happens too many times, the sport dies. Now the question we must ask ourselves is how many times is too many.

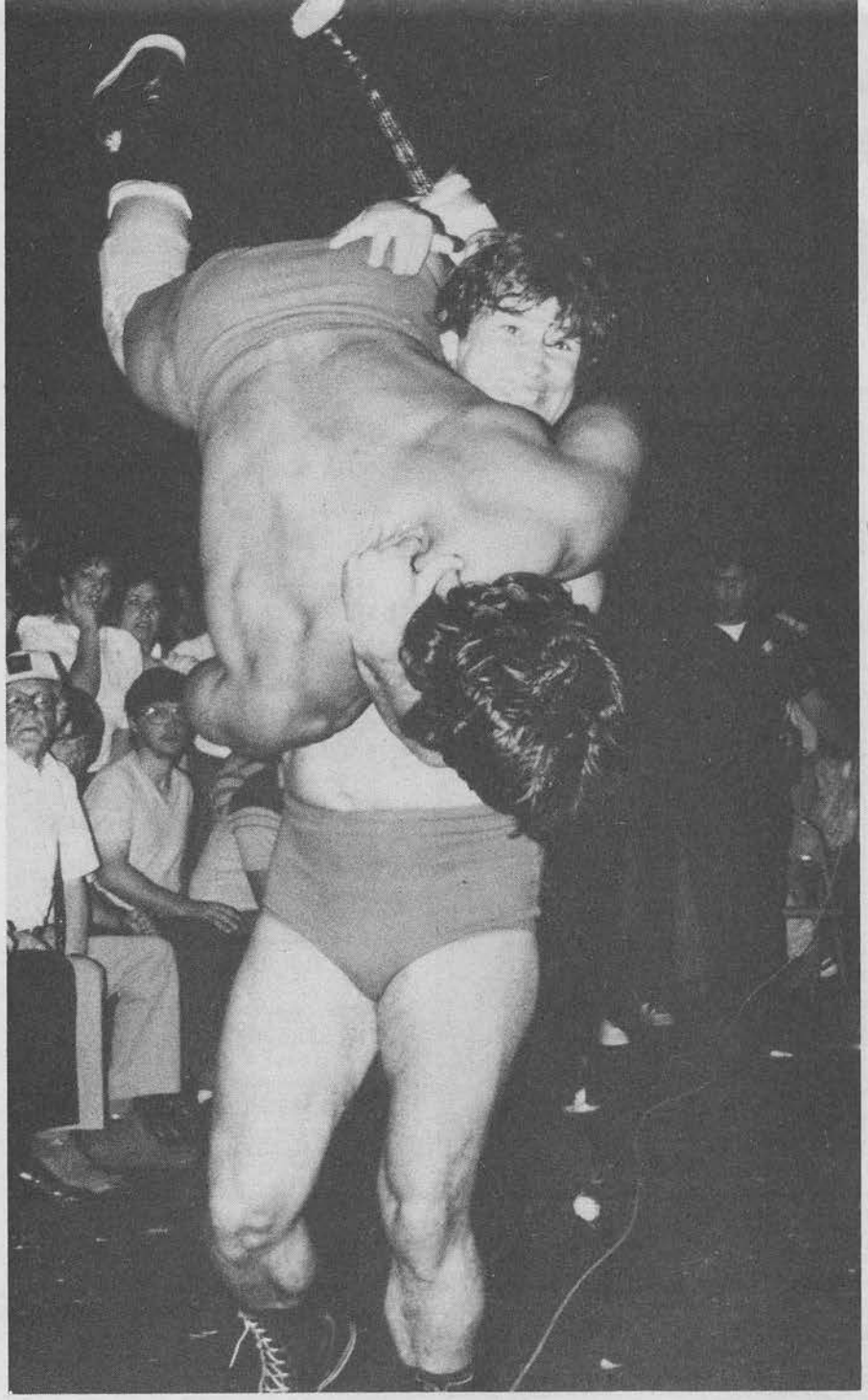
"We've seen the best athletes of our profession destroyed by ambition. No one starts out to be a rulebreaker. It's odd that the regulations seem to push people into rulebreaking.

"If the sport is serious about giving its heroes a chance, the Briscos should have been given a title shot. I don't care what the promoters say. The men deserved a shot and the commissions should have forced the issue. Instead, they let the promoters call the shots. If the commissions put the almighty buck ahead of everything else, why shouldn't the wrestlers?

"This is a business, Matt," the first reporter replied, "and you can't change the fact that money talks and people listen."

"Maybe we have to change it," Brock countered, "if we hope to save the sport from itself. If we can't change it, and the status quo drives men like the Briscos to become rulebreakers, then there's no hope for the sport. We might as well allow everyone to be rulebreakers."

"You can't change the way things are," the second reporter said. "It used to be good enough for the Briscos. The sport didn't change. They did. You can't blame



Jerry, bodyslamming Steamboat on the concrete floor, appears to be very pleased with himself and his new vicious style. If the Briscos can turn bad, anyone can turn bad. Will this sudden change mark the decline of wrestling as we know it?

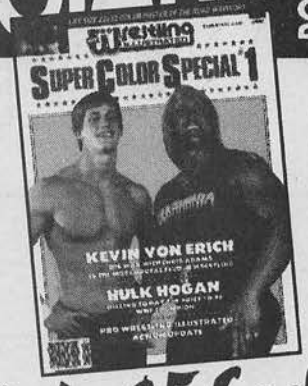
wrestling for that."

"Then where do you put the blame?" Brock asked.

There was silence. Then the first reporter blurted, "The Briscos! They broke the rules, they're to blame for their own actions."

Suddenly, Jack and Jerry Brisco entered the room. They answered questions from the press, defending themselves halfheartedly against accusations of betrayal. There really was nothing to say. There was a pall of hopelessness hanging over the proceedings. Everyone there seemed to be looking for a miracle that could allow them to ignore the truth. The Briscos were rule-breakers and reporters were more sad than angry. □

GIANT POSTERS



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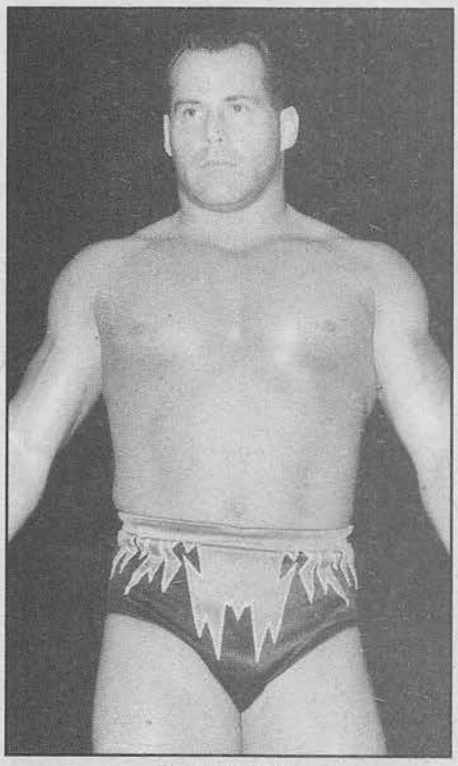
THE Wrestler

TOP 10

1. **STEVE AUSTIN**
   252, Victoria, TX
   (1) WWF World champion
2. **BILL GOLDBERG**
   270, Tulsa, OK
   (3) U.S. heavyweight champion
3. **STING**
   260, Venice Beach, CA
   (2) No. 2 contender: WCW World title
4. **HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**
   279, Greenwich, CT
   (6) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
5. **KEN SHAMROCK**
   235, San Bernardino, CA
   (-) No. 4 contender: WWF World title
6. **TOSHIAKI KAWADA**
   245, Ashikaga, Japan
   (4) All-Japan Triple Crown champion
7. **ROCKY MAIVIA**
   272, Pearl City, HI
   (10) WWF Intercontinental champion
8. **DEAN MALENKO**
   216, Tampa, FL
   (-) WCW cruiserweight champion
9. **ROB VAN DAM**
   240, Battle Creek, MI
   (9) ECW TV champion
10. **TATSUMI FUJINAMI**
    234, Oita, Japan
    (-) IWGP heavyweight champion



Dean Malenko

TAG TEAMS

1. **BILLY GUNN & JESSE JAMES**
   Combined weight: 496 pounds
   (1) WWF World tag team champions
2. **LEX LUGER & DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**
   Combined weight: 525 pounds
   (-) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
3. **LOD 2000**
   Combined weight: 560 pounds
   (2) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
4. **STEVE AUSTIN & THE UNDERTAKER**
   Combined weight: 580 pounds
   (-) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
5. **SABU & ROB VAN DAM**
   Combined weight: 465 pounds
   (-) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title
6. **TERRY FUNK & DUSTIN RUNNELS**
   Combined weight: 501 pounds
   (-) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
7. **KANE & MANKIND**
   Combined weight: 622 pounds
   (-) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title
8. **BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY**
   Combined weight: 585 pounds
   (3) No. 2 contenders: ECW tag title
9. **THE HEADBANGERS**
   Combined weight: 488 pounds
   (7) No. 5 contenders: WWF World tag title
10. **RENO RIGGINS & STEVEN DUNN**
    Combined weight: 471 pounds
    (-) MCW tag team champions

WCW

World Champion:
HOLLYWOOD HOGAN
(C) 275, Venice Beach, CA

1—BILL GOLDBERG
(1) 270, Tulsa, OK
2—STING
(3) 260, Venice Beach, CA
3—DEAN MALENKO
(-) 216, Tampa, FL
4—KEVIN NASH
(-) 356, Detroit, MI
5—LEX LUGER
(5) 265, Chicago, IL
6—CHRIS BENOIT
(9) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
7—BOOKER T
(6) 250, Harlem, NY
8—THE GIANT
(-) 430, parts unknown
9—DAVID FINLAY
(-) 243, Belfast, Ireland
10—CHRIS JERICHO
(4) 225, Vancouver, British Columbia

WWF

World Champion:
STEVE AUSTIN
(C) 252, Victoria, TX

1—ROCKY MAIVIA
(1) 272, Pearl City, HI
2—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY
(2) 279, Greenwich, CT
3—THE UNDERTAKER
(4) 328, parts unknown
4—KEN SHAMROCK
(-) 235, San Bernardino, CA
5—OWEN HART
(5) 227, Calgary, Alberta
6—STEVE BLACKMAN
(-) 245, Annville, PA
7—JEFF JARRETT
(8) 230, Nashville, TN
8—VADER
(7) 450, Denver, CO
9—KANE
(6) 345, parts unknown
10—FAAROOQ
(9) 291, Perry, GA

ECW

ECW Champion:
SHANE DOUGLAS
(C) 240, Pittsburgh, PA

1—ROB VAN DAM
(1) 240, Battle Creek, MI
2—AXL ROTTEN
(-) 302, Philadelphia, PA
3—AL SNOW
(7) 232, Lima, OH
4—SABU
(2) 225, Bombay
5—TAZ
(-) 248, Red Hook, NY
6—THE SANDMAN
(6) 244, Philadelphia, PA
7—JERRY LYNN
(-) 214, Minneapolis, MN
8—BAM BAM BIGELOW
(3) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ
9—TOMMY DREAMER
(5) 245, Yonkers, NY
10—CHRIS CANDIDO
(8) 226, Carteret, NJ

NWA

NWA Champion:
DAN SEVERN
(C) 265, Detroit, MI

1—BARRY WINDHAM
(5) 273, Sweetwater, TX
2—COLORADO KID
(3) 231, Denver, CO
3—ROD PRICE
(2) 265, Los Angeles, CA.
4—KING KONG BUNDY
(9) 446, Atlantic City, NJ
5—MR. GILLIS
(-) 221, Vancouver, British Columbia
6—DOUG GILBERT
(1) 241, Lexington, TN
7—DORY FUNK JR.
(-) 250, Amarillo, TX
8—SID VICIOUS
(-) 318, West Memphis, AR
9—RIP ROGERS
(7) 239, Cleveland, OH
10—PAUL ATLAS
(-) 215, N. Versailles, PA

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

For period ended June 10, 1998

AAA: Champion—Perro Aguayo; **1**—Abismo Negro; **2**—Octagon; **3**—Pentagon; **4**—Heavy Metal; **5**—Fuerza Guerrera; **6**—Cibernetico; **7**—Sangre Chicana; **8**—Perro Aguayo Jr.; **9**—El Corbade Jr.; **10**—Latin Lover.

ALL-PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Maxx Justice; **1**—Moondog Moretti; **2**—Donovan Morgan; **3**—Vic Grimes; **4**—Michael Modest; **5**—Vinny Massarro; **6**—Robert Thompson; **7**—Erin O'Grady; **8**—Frank Murdoch; **9**—Boyce LeGrande; **10**—Boom Boom Comini.

ALTERNATIVE PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Rick Morton; **1**—Tim Blaze; **2**—Jackie Fulton; **3**—Dream Warrior II; **4**—Jeff Knotts; **5**—Buck Mantell; **6**—Southern Studd; **7**—Mad Dog Davidson; **8**—Hollywood Bad Boy; **9**—American Eagle; **10**—Russian Assassin 2000.

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Chainz; **1**—Terminator X; **2**—Red Scorpion; **3**—J.T. Sledge; **4**—Brian Danzig; **5**—Jumpin' Jimmy; **6**—Don Carson; **7**—Gemini; **8**—Kodiak; **9**—Robert Roma; **10**—Steve Niles.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Glen Osbourne; **1**—Reckless Youth; **2**—Lance Diamond; **3**—Inferno Kid; **4**—Devon Storm; **5**—Ace Darling; **6**—Mike Quackenbush; **7**—Boogie Woogie Brown; **8**—Mr. Ooh La La; **9**—Mark Shrader; **10**—Thunder.

MUSIC CITY WRESTLING: Champion—Colorado Kid; **1**—Wolfie D; **2**—Terry Golden; **3**—Kenny Arden; **4**—Frenchy Riviera; **5**—Shane Eden; **6**—Jason Lee; **7**—Chris Michaels; **8**—Brickhouse Brown; **9**—Rockin' Randy; **10**—Tony Rose.

INT'L PRO WRESTLING: Champion—King Kong Bundy; **1**—Tom Brandi; **2**—Corporal Punishment; **3**—Tito Santana; **4**—Julio Sanchez; **5**—Frank Stalletto; **6**—Mike Quackenbush; **7**—Devon Storm; **8**—Rob Harper; **9**—Gene Sinisky; **10**—Jimmy Cicero.

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Tiger Khan; **1**—Mr. Ooh La La; **2**—Julio Sanchez; **3**—Reckless Youth; **4**—Lance Diamond; **5**—Mike Quackenbush; **6**—Sexton Hardcastle; **7**—Boogie Woogie Brown; **8**—Christian Cage; **9**—Dave Patera; **10**—Glen Osbourne.

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—George South; **1**—Italian Stallion; **2**—Ripper; **3**—Black Angel; **4**—The Breeze; **5**—The Bodyguard; **6**—Scotty Hotbody; **7**—Scott Powers; **8**—Super Ninja; **9**—American G.I.; **10**—Flaming Youth.

PRO WRESTLNG XPRESS: Champion—Quinn Magnum; **1**—J.B. Destiny; **2**—Mad Mike; **3**—Gator; **4**—T. Rantula; **5**—Dennis Gregory; **6**—Player; **7**—Sean Evans; **8**—Bubba the Bulldog; **9**—Lord Zoltan; **10**—Country Boy Chris.

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Jimmy Cicero; **1**—Boris Dragoff; **2**—Chris Stephenson; **3**—Cueball Carmichael; **4**—Otto Schwanz; **5**—Major DeBeers; **6**—Big Slam; **7**—Venom; **8**—David Blanchard; **9**—K.C. Thunder; **10**—Eddie Brown.

WINDY CITY WRESTLING: Champion—Mike Anthony; **1**—Bob Backlund; **2**—Steve Boz; **3**—Greg Valentine; **4**—Mike Samson; **5**—Polish Crippler; **6**—Mike Laturna; **7**—Sgt. Storm; **8**—Physical Fascination; **9**—Terry Allen; **10**—Vic Capri.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
TATSUMI FUJINAMI
(C) 234, Oita, Japan

1—KENSUKE SASAKI
(1) 233, Tokyo, Japan
2—SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(2) 287, Gifu, Japan
3—MASA CHONO
(4) 235, Tokyo, Japan
4—HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(6) 270, Tokyo, Japan
5—JUSHIN LIGER
(5) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
6—NAOYA OGAWA
(7) 286, Tokyo, Japan
7—GENICHIRO TENRYU
(-) 235, Fukui, Japan
8—SHINJIRO OTANI
(-) 215, Yokohama, Japan
9—SHIRO KOSHINAKA
(-) 225, Tokyo, Japan
10—BIG TITAN
(-) 352, Calgary, Alberta

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(C) 245, Ashikaga, Japan

1—JUN AKIYAMA
(2) 230, Hiroshima, Japan
2—KENTA KOBASHI
(4) 261, Fukuchiyama, Japan
3—AKIRA TAUE
(3) 265, Chichibu, Japan
4—JOHNNY ACE
(6) 250, San Bernardino, CA
5—STAN HANSEN
(5) 322, Borger, TX
6—MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN
(8) 245, Honolulu, HI
7—GARY ALBRIGHT
(7) 343, Billings, MT
8—STEVE WILLIAMS
(10) 265, Norman, OK
9—TAKAO OMORI
(9) 221, Tokyo, Japan
10—TAMON HONDA
(-) 191, Tokyo, Japan

EMLL

EMLL Champion:
UNIVERSO 2000
(C) 215, parts unknown

1—RAYO DE JALISCO JR
(1) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico
2—STEELE
(-) 250, Winnipeg, Manitoba
3—EL HIJO DEL SANTO
(3) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico
4—ATLANTIS
(9) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
5—CIEN CARAS
(2) 235, Lagos de Moreno, Mexico
6—BLACK WARRIOR
(5) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
7—SHOCKER
(-) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico
8—EMILIO CHARLES JR
(-) 222, Mexico City, Mexico
9—NEGRO CASAS
(4) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
10—BRAZO DE PLATO
(-) 320, Guadalajara, Mexico

PROMO AZTECA

Promo Azteca Champion:
KONNAN
(C) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

1—PIERROTH JR.
(1) 251, Cuernavaca, Mexico
2—PIRATA MORGAN
(2) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
3—TINIEBLAS JR.
(3) 256, Montclova, Mexico
4—BLACK MAGIC
(5) 238, London, England
5—SILVER KING
(6) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
6—LIZMARK JR.
(7) 249, Acapulco, Mexico
7—JUVENTUD GUERRERA
(9) 165, Mexico City, Mexico
8—TARZAN BOY
(10) Monterey, Mexico
9—PSICOSIS
(-) 200, Tijuana, Mexico
10—EL DANDY
(-) 235, Jalisco, Mexico

Rätings ANALYSIS

Have they made a difference? We thought the news for fans of tag team wrestling in the WWF in March was, for the most part, very good. As WCW continued to de-emphasize tag teams, **The New Age Outlaws** continued to improve and get more and more entertaining to watch, **The Disciples of Apocalypse** grew more confident, and **The Headbangers** got on a bit of a roll.

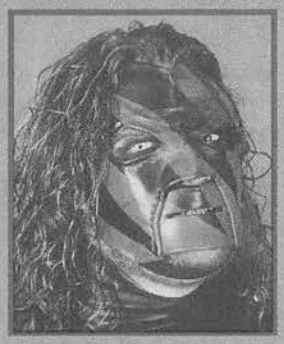
Sunny

But perhaps most importantly, **Sunny** put an end to the bickering between **Hawk** and **Animal** and reunited them as **LOD 2000**, and **Jim Cornette** put together a new version of **The Midnight Express** that featured a rejuvenated **Bob Holly** and **Bart Gunn**. Those two showed some promise in their initial outings together. In mid-May, however, things weren't looking quite as good for either Sunny or Cornette.

Remember that Hawk and Animal became so frustrated by their inability to recapture the World tag team title in February that they went after each other. Now it looks like they're stuck in another mini-slump. Shortly after WrestleMania, where LOD 2000 won a 15-team battle royal, we considered ranking them number one in our tag team ratings. They were looking *that* good. But they failed to unseat **Billy Gunn** and **Jesse James** as tag team champs at Unforgiven in April, and the best they've been able to do since is beat them by disqualification.

Lately they've been struggling in a feud with the DOA, and you know The New Age Outlaws hope that feud rages on for months and months to come. As a result of their struggles, we've dropped LOD 2000 a few notches in the ratings. Sunny apparently hasn't jump-started the career of the LOD the way everyone expected.

And what of this new Midnight Express? Holly and Gunn have yet to show that they are as good as previous versions of The Midnight Express. Cornette guided them to some impressive wins shortly after their formation, but at press time, they were having a difficult time beating The Headbangers. They're still the NWA tag team champions, but that's only because **Mosh** and **Thrasher** have only been able to beat them in *non-title* matches. Perhaps Cornette has lost a bit of his magic managerial touch, because this Midnight Express can't even be considered for one of the top spots in our tag team ratings. Incidentally, what has the "Louisville Lip" done for the careers of **Dan Severn**, who recently left Cornette's camp, and **Barry Windham**?



Kane

Perhaps Jesse James and Billy Gunn really are the dominant team in the WWF.

While we're on the subject of WWF managers, we should discuss **Paul Bearer** as well. To put it bluntly, how much has this deranged man really done for the career of **Kane**, whom he now claims is his son? Kane has consistently been in the WWF ratings since he made his debut in the federation back in October of last year, and he has even made our overall Top 10 a few times, but what has he accomplished lately?

Specifically, what has he done since WrestleMania XIV, when he wrestled his brother, **The Undertaker**, for the first time? Let's see ... he has lost to Undertaker by disqualification in the U.S. ... been pinned by The Undertaker in the U.S. ... been pinned by The Undertaker on the WWF's most recent tour of Europe ... and gotten involved in part two of a feud with **Vader**, a man he dominated in a series of matches this winter.

From our perspective, Kane isn't making a lot of progress. He's dropping in the ratings instead of edging closer to the top. Can't Bearer let Kane put aside his hatred for 'Taker long enough to wrestle for a title? If Kane could beat **Rocky Maivia** for the WWF Intercontinental title ("The Rock" has looked very vulnerable during his entire reign as champion), or, even better, upset **Steve Austin** for the WWF World title, wouldn't that make 'Taker even angrier? He wants his brother to suffer, not win titles and become a bigger star than he is.

We've said it before and we'll say it again here: We think Kane could make a lot more progress if he dumped Bearer. □

That's all for now! **If you have any thoughts on what you see here on this page or anything in our ratings in general, please feel free to drop us a note. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.**

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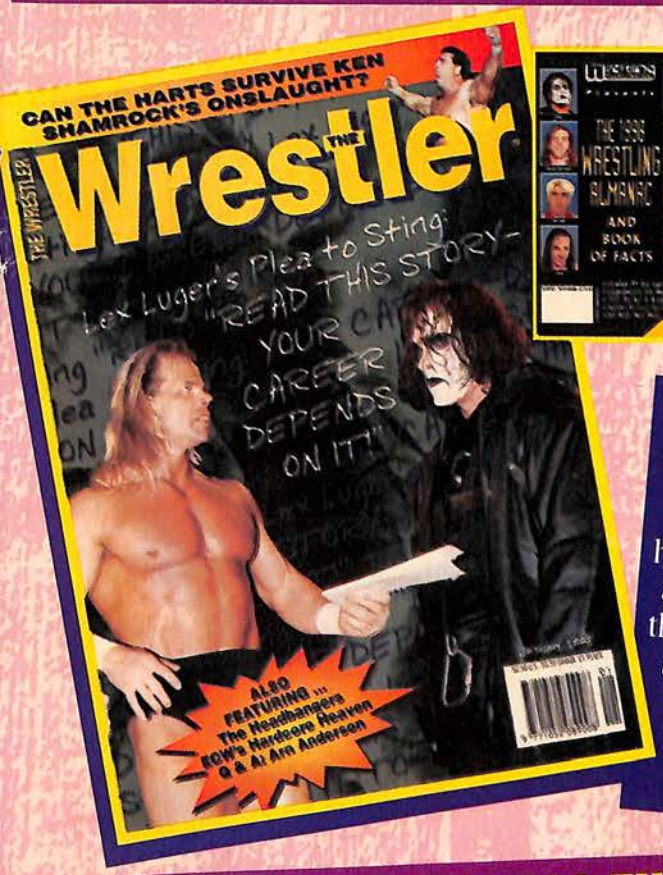

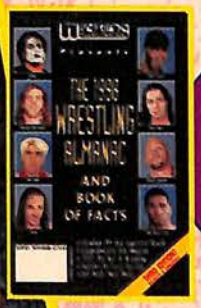

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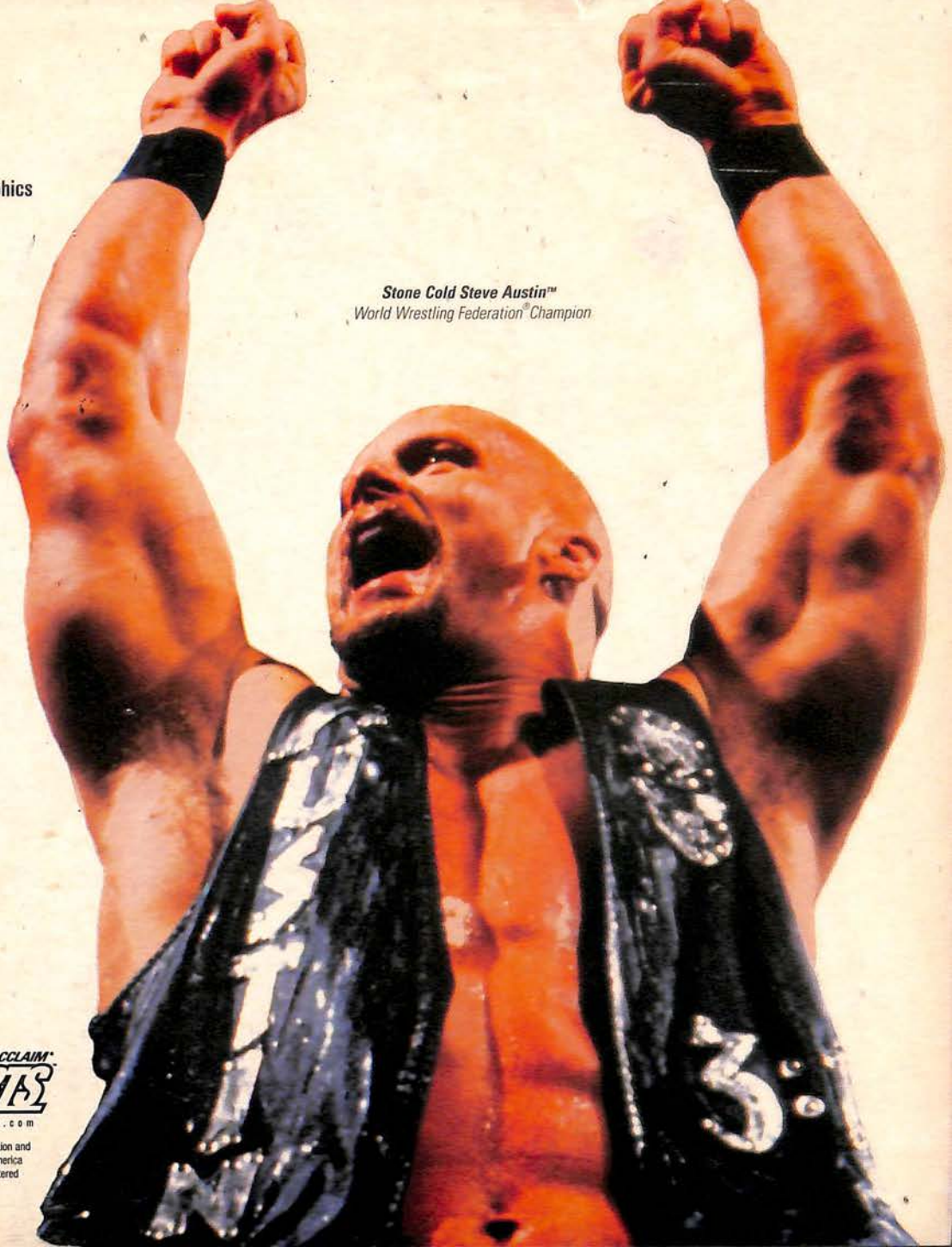

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